33 MOST UNLIKELY ACTION HEROES

TOTAL FILM

MARCH 2016
ISSUE 242

THE WORLD'S BEST MOVIE REVIEWS

Future

ACTION ISSUE

FEATURING

POINT BREAK

TRIPLE 9

ALLEGIANT

PRIDE & PREJUDICE & ZOMBIES

"IT BREAKS A LOT OF RULES"
RYAN REYNOLDS

ON-SET EXCLUSIVE

DEADPOOL

RUDE RADICAL ROGUE – MEET MARVEL'S MAVERICK

TOM HIDDLESTON
LOKI GOES LOCO

GOSLING & CARELL
CRAZY STUPID BRUVS

TIM ROTH
ON THE QT

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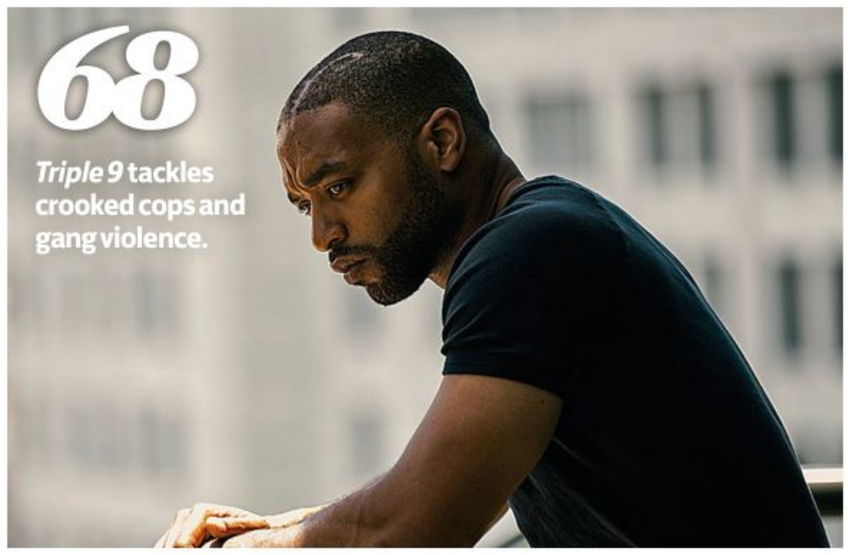


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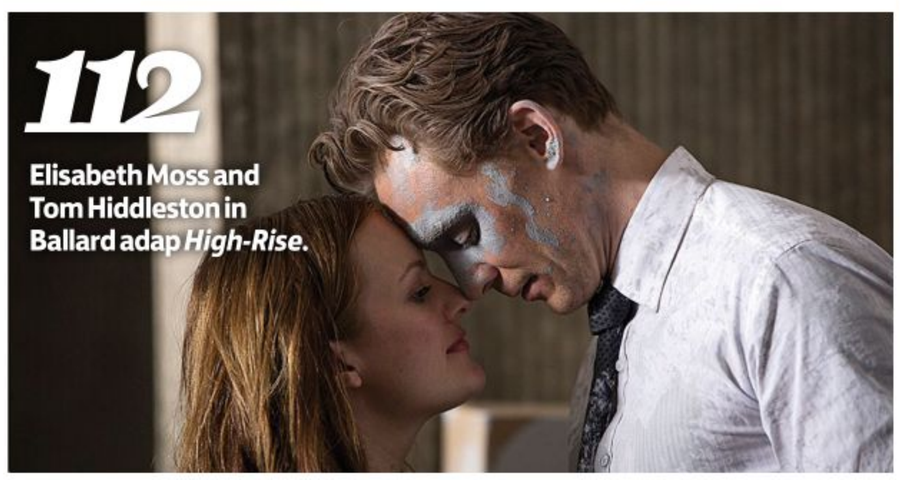
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dialogue

Mail, rants, theories *etc*...

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Balls to the (fourth) wall

Hey, you jerks! The merc with the mouth is finally here, and we're bringing you all the on-set juiciness. But that's not the only action we're celebrating this issue – along with pats on the back for our own incredible dashes to screenings, fights over sponge cake and eye-saucering agility with a laptop, the *TF* team also battled to bring you sweat-stained coverage of Pride And Prejudice And Zombies, Allegiant, Triple 9, Point Break and the top 33 most unlikely action stars ever. Plus we sat down with legends Kevin Costner and Tim Roth, talked news with the Truth team and enjoyed Tom Hiddleston in his pants on the set of High-Rise. Enjoy the issue.

Jane

JANE CROWTHER
EDITOR



Turn to page 58 for our on-set *Deadpool* feature.

Drop us a line: totalfilm@futurenet.com

The ups and downs of making this issue...

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STAR LETTER

Over the past few issues you've featured various articles on *SPECTRE*, and the question that seems to remain is "Will Daniel Craig do another and if not, who will take on the mantle?" While pondering this very question I came across a photo in *TF*238 of a very suave-looking Tom Hiddleston. Do you think he is a possible candidate? He's well-educated, has a good on-screen presence and has experience (and is very good at) playing the slightly psychotic character.

PAUL JENKINS, NEWMARKET

We can well imagine The Hidds being on the shortlist when the time comes; he'd bring an element of danger, especially if he lobs Loki's horn-hat at Moneypenny's coat rack.



Readers! Agree with Paul, or do you fancy another Tom for 007? Hardy? Cruise? Baker? Paul and everyone with a letter printed here will receive a copy of Straight Outta Compton, *out now on Blu-ray, DVD and Digital HD via Universal Pictures Home Entertainment. Didn't send an address? Email it! Who does an ice cube call when he's feeling low? Doctor Tray!*



Simple pleasures

In response to Kevin [Dialogue *TF*240], the films closest to my heart are epitomised by their soundtracks. And John Hughes was the master of soundtracks. Could you imagine *The Breakfast Club* without 'Don't You Forget About Me'? Or *Some Kind Of Wonderful* without 'Miss Amanda Jones'? But the perfect soundtrack song would have to be OMD's 'If You Leave Me' in the closing scenes of *Pretty In Pink*.

JO TORRIE, HAYES

We'd also nominate Karla DeVito's 'We Are Not Alone' (Breakfast Club*'s library dance); The Beatles' 'Twist And Shout'* (Ferris Bueller's Day Off)*; and Macaulay Culkin's own* Home Alone *composition, 'AAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!' aka The Noise We Made Continuously During* Pixels.

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dialogue

Mail, rants, theories *etc*...



Kylo Ren: figure of fun or terrifying heir to Vader?

Wars correspondence

After years of waiting, my patience has been rewarded by *The Force Awakens*, the *Star Wars*-iest film since *Return Of The Jedi*. I've always kept my *Star Wars* tickets – they're all pinned to the side of a bookcase – and was looking forward to adding *TFA* to my collection. Sadly, however, Odeon had other ideas. My local's dispensed with tickets all together – now you just get a receipt, albeit with the title and your seat number on it, but that will have faded to nothing in a year or so. Have other readers experienced this, or is just Norwich? Ticket gripes aside, the film is amazing. You have to wonder what might have been if J.J. had been in charge of the prequels...

DAVE KELK, GREAT YARMOUTH

The Force Awakens is regrettably *not* a classic, and that doesn't mean there aren't pleasures to be had, just that overall it's inevitably a letdown. After a fairly jaunty first 20 minutes, it becomes all too apparent that this is not really a sequel or expansion per se, more a remix, if you like. A functional fantasy-adventure tale brimful of all of the trappings we enjoy but little of the magic we crave. Han Solo's return is nothing short

'A functional fantasy-adventure with little of the magic we crave'

of a complete joy, but Kylo Ren is at times a figure of mirth, not awe, and Andy Serkis arguably delivers arguably the least effective mo-cap work of his distinguished career. There also seems to be a concerted effort on the filmmakers' part to steer clear of anything remotely divisive or controversial from Episodes past; such a risk-averse attitude might satisfy nostalgists, but for a truly game-changing experience you need a vision because sadly an *identity* is what this film is lacking above all else.

NICHOLAS COOPER, VIA EMAIL

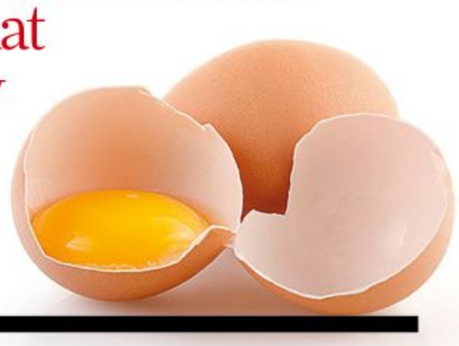
Having prepped for *The Force Awakens* by watching the original *Star Wars* trilogy (for the first time), I was completely underwhelmed by Boba Fett. All my life I've heard tales of this badass bounty hunter who don't take no crap offa nobody and he lived up to none of my expectations. He's just one bounty hunter of many, who by chance sees the Millennium Falcon head to Bespin, and then (SPOILERS) dies in a pathetic and laughable manner. How did he become such an icon? The best

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OFFICE SPACED

Chatter 'gems' overheard in the *Total Film* office this month...

"Does anyone fancy scratching my blood vessel?" **"I wish I had gills."** "I thought that trailer would make me vomit into my kettle, but I enjoyed it." **"Have you ever eaten an egg and not realised it? It could happen to anyone!"**



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50 BEST TEEN MOVIES OF ALL TIME
http://www.gamesradar.com/50-best-teen-movies
Hopeless at relationships, no direction in life, covered in volcanic zits... but enough of Dialogue's problems – have a read of this list, featuring many of John Cusack's finest hours.



50 GREATEST *STAR WARS* SCENES
http://www.gamesradar.com/50-greatest-star-wars-scenes-old
Frankly, we could've run to 100, but there's only so much space on the internet. All selections come from *Episodes I-VI*, so no spoilers if you haven't seen *The Force Awakens* yet. Why haven't you?



60 BEST ANIMATED MOVIES
http://www.gamesradar.com/best-animated-movies
Not only a rundown of the finest 'toonery in cinema history, but quite possibly the only list we've ever run that includes Ringo Starr, Saddam Hussein and the Catbus.

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PEANUTS MOVIE VISITORS OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/677131146237485056
Yes, there was some bother with the double doors in order for Charlie to get his head through, but it was well worth it: the warmth of Snoopy's hug will sustain us till spring.



STAR WARS POP CHIPS OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm_jane/status/676717181074280448
Initial paranoia that there might be Wookiee hairs in the packs of barbeque were soon cast aside as we munched through an entire box of Pop Chips like Jabba The Hutt on cheap day.



THE NIGHT BEFORE CAKE POPS OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/672780708335742976
You never come to work expecting to eat Seth Rogen's head, but that's what happened when he and co-stars Anthony Mackie and Joseph G-L arrived in terrifically tasty form. Plus! Rude Chrimbo sweater.

TV REVIEWS GAMESRADAR.COM/TV



Did you see 'The Husbands Of River Song' on Christmas Day? Where would you rank it among the Doc's other festive specials? Take a look at our sister mag *SFX*'s list http://www.gamesradar.com/doctor-who-christmas-specials and then share your thoughts!

PA IMAGES

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thing about Boba Fett is the behind-the-scenes photo of the actor wearing '80s dad glasses.

RIAN SMITH, DUBLIN

Boba's just a badass. He looks badass, talks badass, and probably has more badass dreams than a distressed proctologist. Dave, if J.J. had done the prequels, maybe George Lucas would now be making a comeback and Chewbacca would be played by a motion-capture mop. Nicholas, in fairness to Serkis, the film was more an intro to his character; for all we know he'll go Gollum in the next one, arguing violently with himself, fishing with his teeth and calling everybody fat. If not, can we have Carrie Fisher doing all the above?

Cage fright

Rage. Left Behind. Outcast. The Dying Of The Light. The Runner. Pay The Ghost... What exactly has happened to Sir Nicolas of Cage, once upon a time THE go-to guy for '90s action flicks and whisper it, also a beneficiary of Oscar...? I expect a fully investigative Career Injection piece on him (for his own sake...) forthwith.

TONY ALLBONES, BEDFORDSHIRE

We actually did administer Mr Cage an Injection in issue 231, though that was before half the films you cite hit the UK, so maybe we need to increase the dosage. Thing about Cage is that he always bounces back; talking of his '90s heyday,



we're praying for his Con Air *character to rock up in* Episode VIII *– imagine the Cameron Poe/Poe Dameron/Cameron Dameron name-confusion hilarity! "Put that BB-8 back in the box!" Yes, we do need to knock the fan fiction on the head. Once we've finished our dystopia/grot mash-up* Fifty Shades Of Mockingjay.

Meeting Mr Alright, Alright, Alright

I do love a list! And your 50 Greatest Romcoms [http://www.gamesradar.com/50-best-romantic-comedies] made me tingle with joy. I have to say bravo for including *The Waitress*, *500 Days Of Summer*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Say Anything*, *Pretty Woman* and *The Princess Bride*. However, I appreciate that narrowing the field to 50 is a challenge, but there are a few I think should get an honourable mention: *A Lot Like Love* (Amanda Peet is charming, Ashton Kutcher sings Bon Jovi); *Sweet Home Alabama* (two gorgeous men, one gorgeous woman, southern accents); and *Win A Date With Tad Hamilton* ("She has six smiles"). And what is it with the lack of Matthew McConaughey films? It's not like there's a limited selection: *How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days*, *EDtv*, *Ghosts Of Girlfriends Past*, *The Wedding Planner*...

HANNAH, HAMPSHIRE

That's the problem with McConaughey – too many to choose from, though the number does dramatically drop if you remove Kate Hudson, Matt leaning on his co-star on the poster and scenes of unnecessary shirtlessness. If we had to pick one rom-McCon, it would be Magic Mike, *aka* Velcro Linings Playbook.

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The next issue of TOTAL FILM on sale 12 February

TOTAL FILM

What action one-liner sums you up best? Tell us yours at @totalfilm #tfoneliner!

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‘It’s about family, and what happens if they don’t agree...’
JOE RUSSO

FIRST LOOK!

Bust a Cap

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR

Let the in-fighting commence...

"We all agree Nazis are bad, space aliens are bad," muses Chris Evans AKA Captain America. "This is the first time you really have two points of view. There's no wrong answer here..."

In case you're wondering, things are about to get very complicated in *Captain America: Civil War*, the third solo outing for the star-spangled superhero. Except it's not all that solo anymore, the threequel featuring pretty much every Marvel hero so far (with the exception of Thor), plus a few new faces, including Chadwick Boseman, who calls his Black Panther "a bit of a maverick".

If the action-packed trailer's anything to go by, this will be the biggest thing to happen in the Marvel Cinematic Universe since, well, Tony Stark went public about being Iron Man back in '08. Ever since Joss Whedon assembled the A-team in 2012, comic fans have waited with bated breath for the inevitable fall-out, as outlined in Mark Millar's 2006 graphic novel *Civil War*. Four years on, the collapse is finally here, directed by *Winter Soldier* co-helmers Anthony and Joe Russo.

"The story's about family and what happens if they don't agree," says Joe Russo of the plot, in which Thaddeus 'Thunderbolt' Ross (a returning William Hurt) enacts an accord that gives the government greater authority over superheroes. The accord splits our Marvel champions into two factions – one under Cap, the other under Iron Man – for one heck of a political smackdown.

Their allies aren't easy to predict, either, with Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) siding with ol' shellhead ("she's always a bit on the perimeter," reasons Johansson) and Ant-Man (Paul Rudd) also entering the fray. And then there's Spider-Man (Tom Holland), swinging in for his cinematic rebirth ahead of his own movie in 2017. The battle lines have been drawn... **JW**

ETA | 29 APRIL *Captain America: Civil War* opens this spring.



Super-group: Team Cap includes Black Panther (Chadwick Boseman) who shows off his pace (right).



‘I like these girls. They’re tough to say no to’
BILL MURRAY

KATE McKINNON
is Jillian Holtzmann
Director Paul Feig says she’s a “nuclear engineer, munitions expert, proton wrangler”.

MELISSA McCARTHY
is Abby Yates
The brains of the group, Feig describes Abby as a “paranormal researcher, supernatural scientist, entity trapper”.

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FIRST LOOK

Skeleton crew

GHOSTBUSTERS | The new phantom fighters suit up, and they mean business...

KRISTEN WIIG
is Erin Gilbert
According to Feig, Erin is a "particle physicist, academic firebrand, spectral warrior".

LESLIE JONES
is Patty Tolan
And finally, the braun. Feig reveals Patty's a "ghost tracker, municipal historian, metaphysical commando".

"A great hope" is how Bill Murray has described the cast of the new *Ghostbusters*, and going by this first official shot of the fearsome foursome kitted up in their jumpsuits and proton packs, he's bang on the money.

Because, yes, the Ghostbusters are back, but they've gone through something of a change since we last saw them kicking spectral ass in 1989's *Ghostbusters II*. Where that sequel reunited the original cast – Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, Ernie Hudson – for a second fight for New York, this much-belated new film hits the reset with a whole new crew. And, yep, this time they're ladies. Director Paul Feig (*Bridesmaids*, *Spy*) has called on some of his funniest pals for the *Ghostbusters* redux, which introduces a new squad consisting of Erin Gilbert (Kristen Wiig), Abby Yates (Melissa McCarthy), Jillian Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon) and Patty Tolan (Leslie Jones).

"It was the hardest thing in the world to put those four together in my head. I took months and months," Feig has admitted. He must have done something right because, after Murray spent years dodging the *Ghostbusters 3* question (even reportedly shredding the script Aykroyd sent him), the 65-year-old was happy to return to old ground. He'll be back in cameo capacity alongside Aykroyd, Hudson, Sigourney Weaver, and Annie Potts (Ramis sadly passed away in 2014). "I like those girls a lot," Murray said. "I mean, I really do. They are tough to say no to."

With the plot imagining a fresh origins story for the Ghostbusters, we'll also meet their hunky new secretary Kevin (Chris Hemsworth) and a fresh foe in the form of baddie Rowan (*SNL*'s Neil Casey). "I wasn't viewing this [*as*] a reboot, because I wanted to come to a world that hadn't been through a ghost crisis before," Feig explains. And while he recently put straight rumours that another male version of *Ghostbusters* starring Channing Tatum and Chris Pratt was a go, saying all of that was "just noise", a new animated series is definitely in the works over at Sony, meaning this is just the beginning for these 'busters... **JW**

ETA | 15 JULY ***Ghostbusters*** **opens this summer.**

FIRST LOOK!

Jungle fever

THE LEGEND OF TARZAN

Alexander Skarsgård ropes up to become the king of the swingers...

"It was very exhausting," admits Alexander Skarsgård of his latest role – Tarzan. "It was eight months, with prep, all in all. It was really intense. A phenomenal experience."

In what is clearly the *True Blood* star's largest role to date, he relished the chance to slip into the loin cloth in this latest live-action adventure inspired by the work of Edgar Rice Burroughs. "I was so intrigued by that character and this take on a very classic story."

Directed by *Harry Potter* veteran David Yates, *The Legend Of Tarzan* sets its story years after its protagonist has left the jungles of Africa to make a new life in 1880s London as John Clayton III – AKA Lord Greystoke – with his wife Jane (Margot Robbie). But when he returns to the Congo as a trade emissary for parliament, Clayton gradually "reverts back to a more animalistic state" as the call of the wild takes hold.

Co-starring Samuel L. Jackson as real-life figure George Washington Williams, the film also features Christoph Waltz, fresh from *SPECTRE* and here playing Captain Leon Rom, Tarzan's nemesis when he returns to his jungle habitat. "I've never experienced anything like it," says Waltz, who was wowed when he saw the sets at Leavesden Studios – 200 yards long, with real trees, running water and vegetation. "That was almost like old-school filmmaking."

While Yates and his team shot the 3D film with elements of greenscreen and CGI, as well as real-life footage filmed in Gabon in West Africa, Skarsgård was also impressed by what he saw. "I didn't know what it would be like when you do a big movie like that. Are they going to micromanage you? Are they going to be nervous if you want to change one word? But if something wasn't working we would play around with it. It was so alive and so organic." **JM**

ETA | 8 JULY *Tarzan* opens this summer.



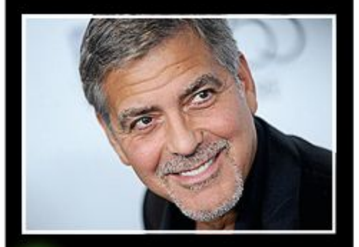
From scratch: Alexander Skarsgård and Margot Robbie bring *Tarzan* back to the jungle.

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RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

What's stopping, what's starting in movieland...



George Clooney has lined up a trio of A-listers for his next directing gig. The long-gestating *Suburbicon* has a script by the Coen brothers, and Josh Brolin, Matt Damon and Julianne Moore are set to star.

Keanu Reeves' actioner *The Seventh Sword* is bruised: director Gee Malik Linton has lobbied to have his name taken off the credits. Rumours of Reeves supervising a new edit have been denied.

Every actor and his Wookiee are in line for the standalone Han Solo spin-off. Among the 2,500 names said to be on the longlist for the lead role are Miles Teller, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Jack Reynor, Logan Lerman and Dave Franco.

It doesn't look like Daredevil and Jessica Jones will be joining the Marvel Cinematic Universe anytime soon. "There is the possibility of a crossover, but it's more complicated," said *Avengers: Infinity War* director Anthony Russo.



Christopher McQuarrie will be the first director to direct more than one *Mission: Impossible* when he returns for part 6. Rebecca Ferguson is also reprising Ilsa Faust.

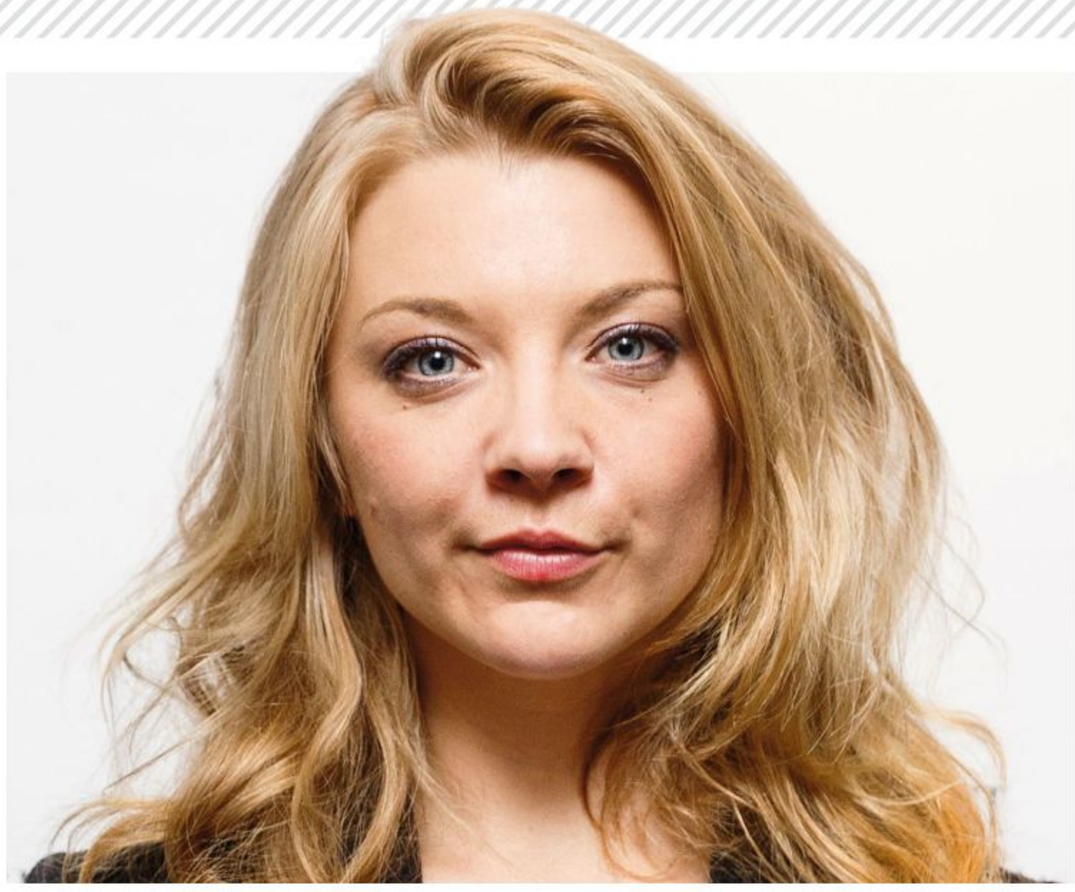
PA, GETTY

You talkin' to me?



Film quotes pose as questions. Film stars try to cope. In the crosshairs this month:

Natalie Dormer



You talkin' to me?
Are you talking to me? I've spoken to a lot of journalists recently; I've just finished promoting *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*. I'm just having to rewire my brain because this is my first day talking about *The Forest*.

Do you feel lucky, punk?
Yeah, I feel really lucky. I'm part of two incredible ensemble casts, with *Hunger Games* and *Game Of Thrones*, and now 2016 is all about me exploring my own projects as a leading female. I feel really lucky I'm being given opportunities like *The Forest* and about how the rest of my 2016 is starting to shape up. It feels like a new chapter, a new phase of my career.

You either surf or fight...
I don't surf. I scuba dive. [*laughs*] I try to scuba dive regularly – as regularly as my shooting schedule allows. But yeah, you either scuba dive or fight, if you're Natalie Dormer.

What's the last thing you do remember?
Like *Memento*, [*my memory of* The Forest] is kind of like waking up the day after, where all the days merge into one and you don't know what day you're in anymore. It's either one memory, or it's like 37, of standing in a forest in the dark, trying to negotiate the cold and the mosquitoes – which seem like they should not be in the same place at the same time – running around and screaming a lot. I have that recurring memory because it happened a lot.

Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?
I'd like to [*laughs*]. Yeah, I mean, he should call me sometime. I'm open to dancing, by any invitation.

'Cold and mosquitoes should not exist in the same place at the same time'

When you can live forever, what do you live for?
Actors kind of cheat. We do live forever – everything we put down on celluloid or digital will exist after us. I live to do the work, and it will live on way after I'm gone.

What's your favourite scary movie?
I have a few. I'm a big fan of *The Orphanage*. I'm also a big fan of *The Others*. *Julia's Eyes*. I liked *It Follows* last year, actually. I like horrors, but like *The Forest*, I like more psychological horrors.

What's in California?
My job. [*laughs*] And guacamole. When I'm in California, I know I'm either about to do a shoot or a press junket, and I'm about to have a lot of guacamole. So, work and guacamole is in California.

I want to be *the* queen.
She got there, didn't she? She got there. She married Tommen in [Game Of Thrones] Season 5. She did it. [*laughs*] I mean, it's a minor detail that she's in a prison cell right now. But the girl did it. I think Margaery has an unhealthy work/life balance. I try for a much healthier work/life balance... **MM**

ETA | 26 FEBRUARY *The Forest* opens next month.



Trees company: Dormer joins Yukiyoshi Ozawa and Taylor Kinney in *The Forest*.

Questions taken from *Taxi Driver, Dirty Harry, Apocalypse Now, Memento, Batman, Twilight, Scream, Borat, Game Of Thrones.*

‘I would retire tomorrow if I ever got bored with what I do’

Between takes

Bryan Cranston doesn’t see things in black and white...

You star in *Kung Fu Panda 3* as Po’s long-lost birth father, Li. How did you channel your inner panda?
Li’s a big boy so I wanted the resonance of my voice to be big and the laugh to be big. He’s just this larger-than-life character so I wanted a physicality to be behind that so when you see him, you feel like the voice does match that size of a man, or panda, or man-panda? A man-da?

Jack Black told us your character was originally a lot more serious?
Yes, we started to record when the script was more serious. It was OK but wasn’t infused with as much energy or fun as we felt it could be. They took a step back and reviewed what they had. Then we went back to stage two and re-recorded pretty much everything and that’s where we found the character.

***Malcolm in The Middle* defined you for a time. *Breaking Bad* then made you a dramatic name. Is being pigeon-holed a concern?**
I do like to move around and keep people guessing. I am an actor so I want to have a well-rounded experience just like you would as a person. I don’t want always be to silly. I want to be in sincere, important stories as well. I did *Godzilla* because I loved Godzilla as child. If I’m a little scared of a project, it’s probably a good one to do.

How has your post-*Breaking Bad* life changed?
Breaking Bad opened up the level of opportunities for me. A lot of things have presented themselves to me that I am interested in, but it’s all about the story. I wouldn’t be doing *Kung Fu Panda 3* if I didn’t like the story.

Is acting still a passion for you, 25 years into your career?
I would retire tomorrow if I ever got bored with what I do. I love the process. I love digging in and I even love the arguments because artistic frustration is embedded in every work. [*But*] when I’m leading the cast or producing a show, I don’t allow bitching. I want to be around creative people because it’s a fascinating life. **TB**

ETA | 11 MARCH *Kung Fu Panda 3* opens this spring.



Pandamonium: Cranston joins Po (Jack Black).

CORBIS

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Big guns: Kurt Russell and Richard Jenkins mean business.

EXCLUSIVE!

Mad Axe

BONE TOMAHAWK | The West just got *really* wild...

If you want a mighty fine western starring Kurt Russell, there's *The Hateful Eight*. If you want a truly superb western starring Kurt Russell, there's *Bone Tomahawk*. Debut director S. Craig Zahler tells us about his *The Searchers*-meets-*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* hybrid.

BACK STORY

"I wrote a dark western called *The Brigands Of Rattleborge*, which got picked up by Warner Bros. A number of A-list directors and actors moved through it and did not commit – including Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise. So I wrote *Bone Tomahawk*. Kurt Russell came on board, and Richard Jenkins shortly thereafter. They were committed for years."

SHOOTING PAIN

"We shot *Bone Tomahawk* in 21 days. The cast [*Russell, Jenkins, Matthew Fox, Patrick Wilson*] committed, and no one was well paid. All these guys did their own stunts. They got dragged and punched, and fell on dirt. Our stunt co-ordinator said, 'This stuff compares to the Hong Kong stuff I grew up with.'"

THE OLD WEST

"People have mentioned that Chicory [*Jenkins*] reminds them of Walter Brennan in *Rio Bravo*, and *The Searchers* comes up a bunch. But I thought about neither while writing. I can see the Brennan thing: Chicory is distracted, earnest and sweet. But I've not seen *Rio Bravo* for 20 years."

THE HORROR

"In terms of how nasty it gets, and who lives and dies – they were surprises to me! There's some horrible shit. But if things feel real you can go far. My style is dry, and I hold on to that through the violence. I'm a huge fan of Dario Argento, but it doesn't become that."

WALKING TALL

"I don't want walk outs; I want people to care enough about these characters that they have to stay. But the producer showed *that* scene [*you'll know it when you see it!*] to his wife. She actually vomited in her mouth. But hey, it's supposed to make you really uncomfortable!" **JG**

ETA | 19 FEBRUARY *Bone Tomahawk* opens next month.

Listen Up, HOLLYWOOD

This month, **Top Gun 2**. Buzz pitches four ideas for the belated sequel.

TOP NUN

Turns out Maverick (Tom Cruise) has been a priest for 30 years and Charlie (Kelly McGillis) joined a convent. The saintly duo must return to the Fighter Weapons School at Miramar, San Diego when the naval instructors develop food poisoning from pea soup and start blowing chunks. Maverick and Charlie tutor a new wave of aviators against the evil of 21st-century aviation: drones.



TOP BEGUN

Why not go the prequel route and zoom in on 14-year-old Pete Mitchell as he bunks off school for a day and joyrides his dad's F12 through the wide blue heavens? Riding shotgun is his trusty bud Gosling, the pair blasting 'Great Balls Of Fire' on a ghetto blaster. Romantic subplot: Mitch develops a crush on an androgynous geography teacher.

TOP SHOGUN

Well, the Cruiser has already starred in *The Last Samurai* so why not cross-pollinate? Mind you, not sure how Tom's gonna squeeze into that cockpit wearing full armour, or if you really need a Katana when dogfighting at 10,000 feet. Val Kilmer pitches up as a flea-ridden ronin named Liceman. The threequel could do another time-leap: Top Hun.

TOP PUN

Viper bites it, Iceman is iced and Hollywood opens the door for Michael Ironside's character because it's a nice Jester. Cougar dates an older woman. Merlin boards his plane with two dead possums but only one carry-on is allowed. Maverick and Charlie dine in a Chinese restaurant but the lights are too bright so they dim sum. Hmmm, maybe Stop Pun is a better title? **JG**

ETA | TBC *Top Gun 2* is currently in pre-production.



EXCLUSIVE!

Man or puppet

ANOMALISA | Charlie Kaufman is back pulling the strings for this artful animation...



The brilliant mind behind *Being John Malkovich* is back. Charlie Kaufman has been absent from our screens since his dense directorial debut *Synecdoche, New York* premiered in 2008.

Since then, he's written three screenplays and three TV pilots – all unrealised. "I've been trying," he sighs. "I couldn't get things made. I wasn't silent by choice." Thankfully, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* has not seen his wonderfully weird worldview diminish in all this time.

His latest film *Anomalisa* is a sublime stop-motion animation about motivational speaker Michael Stone (voiced by David Thewlis), who arrives at a Cincinnati hotel to give a keynote speech only to become engulfed by an existential crisis.

If it sounds heavyweight, the film has an undeniable *Eternal Sunshine*-like tender streak, as the lonely Michael meets telesales agent Lisa (Jennifer Jason Leigh). Yet adding to the surreal dreamy feel, every other voice – from Michael's wife to his ex-girlfriend Donna, whom he meets for an anguished drink, to Lisa's friend Emily – is provided by Tom Noonan, who starred with Leigh in *Synecdoche*.

Both actors, along with Thewlis, had previously worked with Kaufman in 2005 – when *Anomalisa* performed live as part of composer Carter Burwell's Theatre Of The New Ear, a series of sound plays with Foley artists creating sound effects live on stage. Kaufman, who co-directs the film version with animator Duke Johnson, wasn't immediately sold on the idea of turning it into a movie. "I was worried," he admits, "and a little bit resistant. But once we started working on it, it felt like it was becoming something beautiful."

'Beautiful' is certainly one way of describing *Anomalisa*, which has the look of a CG movie but is entirely puppet-driven. "I want people

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Losing steam: Michael (David Thewlis) ponders his relationship with Lisa (Jennifer Jason Leigh, below) and (left) animators work with intricate 3D-printed parts.





to know how hard it was to do this stuff," laughs Johnson. "There was no computer animation in the entire movie. People say, 'What's outside the windows, with the city – is that computer animated?' We built that city. We built those buildings. We lit them with individual lights. The clouds are cotton!"

With the puppets containing visible seams to highlight their hand-crafted nature, the faces were created via a 3D printer. With Michael inspired by Johnson's ex-brother-in-law and Lisa based on a woman seen in an LA eatery, the ubiquitous-looking support cast were all modelled on employees at Starburns Industries, the animation company Johnson works for. "We talked a lot about what they were going to look like," says the animator, "trying to make them specific but anonymous."

Budgeted at $8m, Kaufman initially bankrolled the project using crowdfunding website Kickstarter, raising over $400,000 to get the film moving. "Since 2008, when *Synecdoche* came out, it's gotten hard for me," he admits. "But it also got hard for everyone. Movie studios are making very predictable, conventional movies, and I tend not to write big movies or what are perceived as big movies."

Fortunately, *Anomalisa* is proving to be a critical darling. Winning the Grand Jury Prize when it premiered at the Venice Film Festival last year, it's already been nominated for a Golden Globe and an Oscar nod seems a certainty. While the competition is tough this year, with Pixar's *Inside Out* surely the favourite, *Anomalisa* may yet become the first R-rated animated movie to win an Academy Award.

As for the certification, Kaufman is unconcerned; albeit worlds away from the graphic groping in *Team America: World Police* – the last R-rated puppet movie to cause a big stir – the film does contain a sex scene between Michael and Lisa. "It's not for children," Kaufman warns. True enough. But *Anomalisa* is for just about everyone else. **JM**

ETA | 11 MARCH *Anomalisa* opens in the spring.

'There was no computer animation – we built the city, we lit the buildings...'
DUKE JOHNSON

Q&A JENNIFER JASON LEIGH

On puppet sex, Italian singing, and watching grown men cry...



How did you feel when you first saw *Anomalisa*?
It is a lot to take in, and you're responding so emotionally... It hits you in such a deep way. Your brain is being tricked all the time. You keep forgetting they're puppets. At least I did. And then I'd remember... Like the sex scene is so intimate and so awkward and so real – but they're puppets.

How would you describe Lisa?
We all know a Lisa or we all are a Lisa in a certain way. She's the best of all of us. I love her. She's so sweet and she's a good girl... She sees the world as it sees her. She's not downtrodden. She's not self-pitying. She just accepts who she is. She's one of the best roles I've ever had.

You even get to sing – in Italian – 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun'. How did that make you feel?
I loved singing it. I was shy. I was nervous – which is how Lisa feels, so it was perfect. I loved doing it, and I loved that I got to. That it is part of this movie is brilliant for me.

How was it working on *The Hateful Eight*?
Tremendous. Beyond description. It was crazy-good. The entire cast were texting each other! I text like crazy now – I don't talk on the phone anymore hardly. But we all remained very, very... It was really exceptional. I've never seen so many grown men cry at the wrap, y'know? Nobody wanted it to end.

Working with Quentin Tarantino and Charlie Kaufman – does it feel like a good time for you?
This is turning out to be the best year of my life. I haven't had a year like this for a long time. So you never know. That's what this movie says too: love comes and it goes. **JM**

PA



X-appeal: (l-r) Rose Byrne, Nicholas Hoult, Lucas Till and Jennifer Lawrence are among the cast.

TRAILER BREAKDOWN!

New mutants

X-MEN: APOCALYPSE | We break down the trailer for Bryan Singer's latest X flick...



1 "I saw the end of the world," trembles a young Jean Grey (Sophie Turner), having just suffered a stormy vision of apocalyptic destruction. A more-put-together-than-before Charles Xavier (James McAvoy) reassures her "it was just a dream", but given the film's called *X-Men: Apocalypse*, we're not exactly comforted.



2 Rose Byrne's returning CIA agent Moira MacTaggert explains that new baddie Apocalypse (Oscar Isaac, left) is back, and about to choose four beings to "imbue with power". Cue Magneto (Michael Fassbender) heading up an '80s version of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, alongside Storm, Angel and Psylocke.



3 "Not all of us can control our powers," mopes Scott Summers aka Cyclops (Tye Sheridan), to which Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence) replies: "Then don't." Looks like she'll have an interesting approach to training as she takes Cyclops, plus the young Jean Grey and Nightcrawler (Kodi Smit-McPhee), under her proverbial wing.



4 Look who's back! Quicksilver (Evan Peters) was the surprise hit of the last film, *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*, and he's making a speedy return in *Apocalypse*. Will he run circles around the new cast? Is he speeding through a school to cheat on exams? Will anybody ever realise he's the most unstoppable mutant ever? Stay tuned.



5 Apocalypse sets out his stock against a stormy sky, apparently using Cerebro to single out the world's non-mutants. "Everything they've built will fall," he thunders as New York explodes. "And from the ashes of their world, we'll build a better one." He's taking his name literally, then.



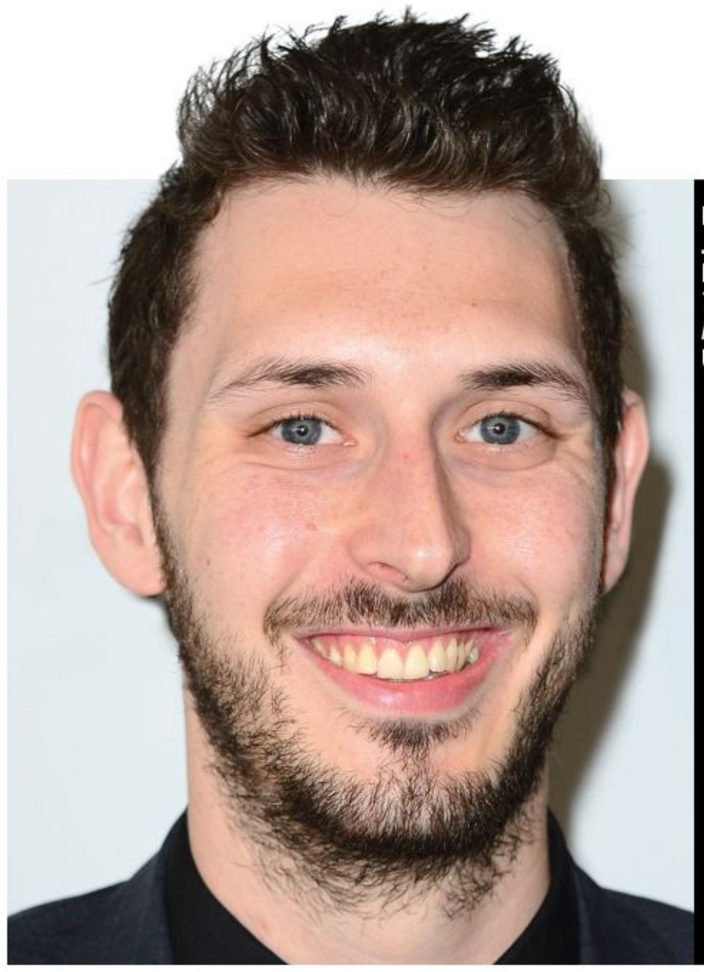
6 The money shot finally unveils Charles embracing his signature Prof X look, thereby bringing the franchise full circle. How'll he lose his locks? And can we expect Patrick Stewart to cameo for a 'before and after' comparison? That remains a mystery... **JW**

ETA | 19 MAY *X-Men: Apocalypse* opens later this year.

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Funny people

Comedy heroes on what makes them laugh. This month: **Blake Harrison**



Name: *Blake Harrison*
Job: *Actor*
Films/TV: *The Inbetweeners, Him & Her*
Upcoming: *Dad's Army*



MY COMEDY PRESENT
They sent me the script for **DAD'S ARMY**, and I had a chat with [*director*] Oliver Parker. It just seemed like a no-brainer. Oliver didn't want carbon copies of the original characters. But in the style of comedy and that kind of witty wordplay, the essence of the characters is still very much in keeping with what was there originally.



MY COMEDY PAST
We just fell into these roles in the group in **THE INBETWEENERS**, and it just seemed to work. We took a bit of a liberty on the last film. I think we realised it was the last one and we thought 'we're just going to have a really good laugh'. It's one of those things – when you know you shouldn't be doing something, it makes being naughty that much funnier.



MY FAVOURITE FUNNY MOVIE
I was one of those annoying little 10-year-olds that would run around quoting **ACE VENTURA** all the time. I loved it. I think it's probably a combination of *Ace Ventura* and *Wayne's World* which made me think, "Oh, it's really funny to copy these people, and then I can make some people laugh." That was really influential to me as a kid.



MY COMEDY HERO
Jim Carrey was up there, and Robin Williams before that. That larger-than-life performance; very physical, hugely energetic. I was really into that when I was younger. Now I look at people like... Will Ferrell, Paul Rudd... Do you know what? **MELISSA MCCARTHY** – when she's let loose to just adlib [*in* This Is 40*'s outtakes*], it's just hilarious.



MY FUNNIEST CO-STAR
I've been very lucky to work with some very funny people. But, for me, **MICHAEL GAMBON**. The man is too funny. On a wet winter's day out in a field in Scarborough, what you want is for Michael Gambon to just start talking. He's just funny. He just loves to play games and have a laugh. He's a very, very funny man.



MY FAVOURITE TV SITCOM
It has to be **FRIENDS**. I still watch it now. And especially for me, the early series – when the acting is so real and on-point, and yet the writing is witty and so clever – there's an emotional investment as well as finding them very funny. Series 1 to 3 of *Friends* is just unsurpassable. **MM**

ETA | 5 FEBRUARY *Dad's Army* opens next month.

THE SHORT LIST

The best Frankenstein movies...

1 FRANKENSTEIN (1931)



James Whale's stalwart offering set the bar for every Frankenstein film that followed in its lumbering wake. As influential as the novel itself, many tropes created for the film were mimicked by later outings to lesser effect.

2 BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)



One of the first – and best – horror sequels to achieve the same levels of success as its predecessor. James Whale returned, lured by the promise of creative control: a risk that paid off for the studio.

3 YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN (1974)



Spoof? Parody? Homage? Whatever you choose to call it, this is Mel Brooks at his finest, poking fun at the mythology through this brilliantly-realised comedy. Shelley's story is expanded upon and mocked, all in the name of subversion.

4 GODS AND MONSTERS (1998)



This awards favourite was a fictionalised quasi-biopic of James Whale. Whale (Ian McKellen) is recovering from a stroke in his later years; gaps in his past are filled in by throwbacks to his time during World War I and production on *Bride Of Frankenstein*.

5 FRANKENWEENIE (2012)



Tim Burton's stop-motion movie turned the terrifying monster into a sweet, loveable pet. Burton takes certain iconic elements of the Frankenstein mythology and fits it into a boy-and-his-dog story. **GS**

For more, go to gamesradar.com/best-frankenstein-movies

HINDSIGHT CORNER!

Stars eat their words...



PA IMAGES/ CORBIS

SALMA HAYEK

Everly (2014)

July 2014: "Everly is the most badass of anybody I've ever played, or seen."
March 2015: "It's not what I thought it would be. I want it to go away."

It Shouldn't Happen To A Film Journalist



Editor-at-Large Jamie Graham lifts the lid on movie journalism. This month: **in-flight movies.**

Paul Thomas Anderson is a big fan of watching movies on a seat-back screen, and happily confesses to viewing as many as he could cram in while flying hither and thither on the *Inherent Vice* press tour. This from the guy who advocates film over digital and who presented *The Master* in eye-saucering 65mm.


The only sensible way to get *Dope* on a plane.

His point being, yes, it's entirely preferable to take in *Interstellar* or *Mad Max: Fury Road* on a 60ft screen, but sometimes, when you're run off your feet and wind up missing a heap of movies you're desperate to see, a 10-hour journey in a hurtling, fart-smelling tube equipped with in-flight entertainment is a godsend.

Well, contrary to popular belief, a career in film journalism doesn't (just) mean you're paid to watch films – the little matter of actually creating a magazine takes up your nine to five, and most viewing occurs in the depths of the evening, after a full working day. Which isn't said to invite sympathy. As if. This, make no mistake, is the best job in the world, and dedicating an evening to seeing a movie some two months before it's released isn't exactly a hardship. No, it's mentioned by way of explaining that film journos, like everyone else, miss out on movies at the multiplex, so that plane trip to LA can be as enthralling in itself as the interview or set visit that awaits at the other end.

'A plane trip can be as enthralling as a set visit'

Last week I emerged onto the sun-blistered tarmac of LAX having squeezed in *Love & Mercy*, *Fantastic Four*, *The Diary Of A Teenage Girl*, *Southpaw* and *Dope*. By plane-viewing standards, that's one hell of list (well, *Fantastic Four* aside), for normally I commit to playing 'catchup crap'. After all, few things irk like having a masterpiece shrunk down to 10"x6" and then interrupted by cabin announcements, wailing toddlers and the snack trolley rolling over your foot. Thus I've endured some far-from-divine movie marathons up in the heavens, the worst being an excruciating triple bill of *The Last Airbender*, *Jonah Hex* and *Eat Pray Love* en route to New York. (Arriving at JFK to find my luggage had been lost was a trifling inconvenience in comparison.)

Still, if ever there's a place to soak up such godawful offerings, it's on a plane, where all critical faculties can be left behind with your baggage. This is my only excuse for laughing out loud enough times while watching *Mrs Brown's Boys D'Movie* for the woman next to me to say, "That sounded like fun. What was it?" I told her, she sparked it up, and from the corner of my eye I saw her sit stony faced for 90 minutes.

Most of my in-flight viewing, however, seems to be devoted to watching movies loaded with sex scenes. I don't know how it happens (honest), but you can bet I'll be sat next to a convivial granny and suddenly my screen will be beaming bouncing boobs and beefy buttocks. So often does this happen that I half expect to be arrested as a sex pest when I touch down in foreign climes. All I can do is attest my innocence and plead rotten luck. I mean, how was I to know that some little movie entitled *Fifty Shades Of Grey* would be a lovingly-lensed ode to BDSM?

Jamie will return next issue...
For more misadventures follow: @jamie_graham9 on Twitter.

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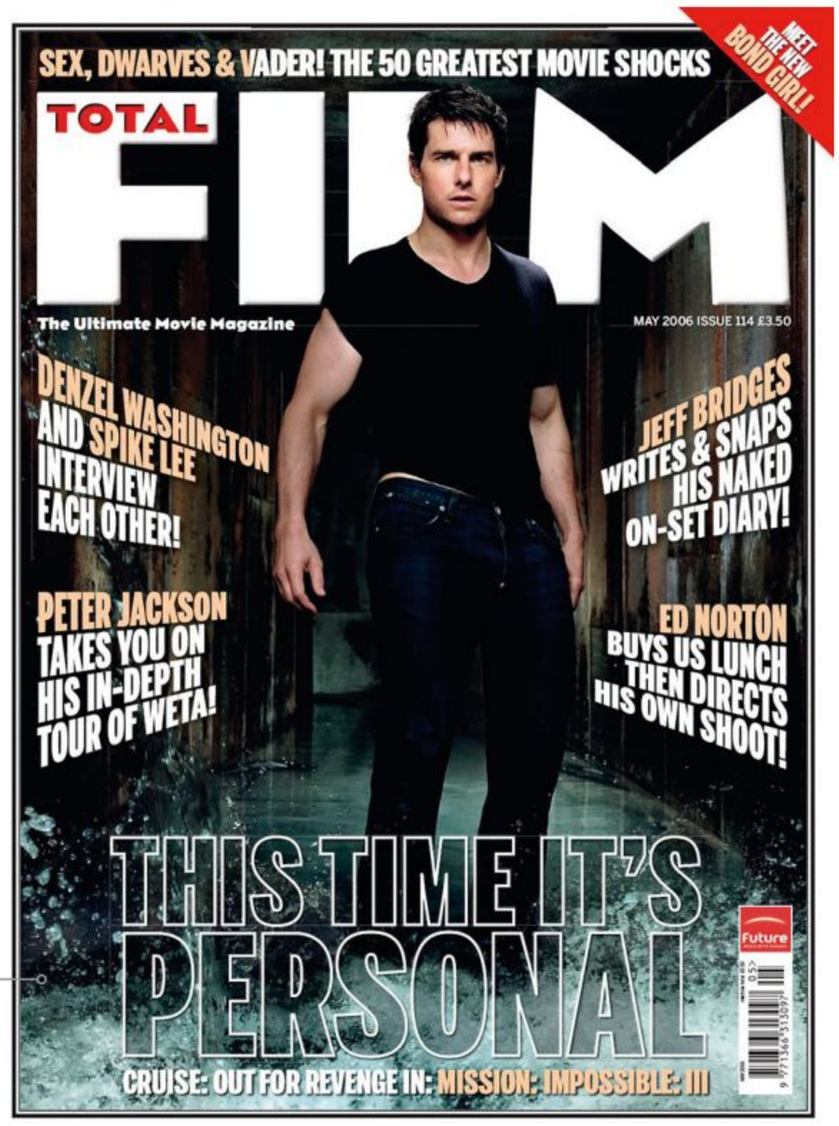
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FLASHBACK

This month: Issue 114, May 2006

Let's do the time warp as we look back at classic issues of Total Film...



COVER STORY

TF cowered on set of *Mission: Impossible III* as a 16-wheeler truck flipped over and a chopper zoomed low with a leering Philip Seymour Hoffman leaning out. Tom Cruise spent the day sprinting but found time to pant, "I knew J.J. had the ability to tell stories, so the first thing I said to him was, 'I want this film to be J.J. Abrams' *Mission: Impossible*.'" Abrams, meanwhile, was keen to point out that "Tom is a really normal guy" and that Cruise's Ethan Hunt was finally about to meet his match: "He comes up against an adversary that is scary, clever and mysterious. Philip is just amazing."



THE INSIDE SCOOP

Also in the issue, Peter Jackson took us on a personal tour of the Weta workshop, Spike Lee and Denzel Washington sat down to chat *Inside Man* (and previous collabs *He Got Game*, *Malcolm X*, *Mo' Better Blues*), Eva Green talked Vesper Lynd and Jeff Bridges showed us his on-set photos of average-schmoe-makes-a porn-movie dramedy *The Moguls* (thankfully they weren't *too* revealing). And we picked the 50 Most Shocking Scenes In Cinema History ("People ask me what dog shit tasted like. It tasted like shit," said Divine of *that* scene in *Pink Flamingos*).

QUOTE ME ON THAT

"I don't go to the gym, I don't train and I'm not careful about what I eat. I wish I could share some secret but I'm just a lucky sonofabitch."

Harrison Ford

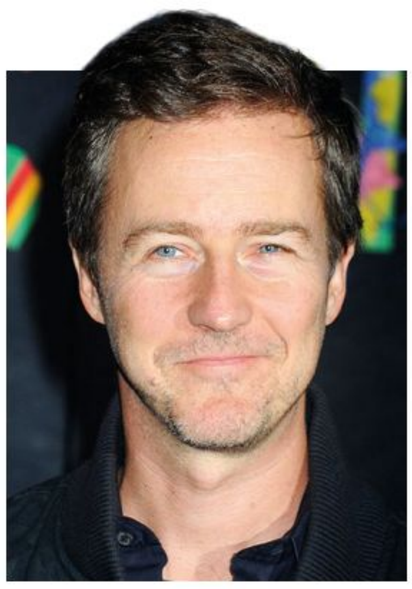
OLD NEWS

James Cameron announced that he planned to end his sabbatical from feature films with long-festering movie dream Project 880, also known as *Avatar*. Cameron described it as "crazy, balls-out sci-fi" spun around an agile warrior woman.

Hugh Jackman assured us that trilogy closer *X-Men: The Last Stand* had "the best script of any of the three" while director Brett Ratner was adamant there'd be no more. "This is closure for the series," he stated. "This is the last stand, for sure."

Neil LaBute revealed that his remake of *The Wicker Man* would move the action to an island off the coast of Maine and that Nic Cage's copper would have an allergy to, er, bee stings. "I always loved the [*original*] movie... But never thought it couldn't be touched."

Legendary director Werner Herzog told us of his plans to make POW thriller *Rescue Dawn* with Christian Bale. "I find him one of the greatest talents of his generation," said Herzog. "We made up our minds long before he did Batman."



PA IMAGES

TF INTERVIEW EDWARD NORTON

Fighting talk from the Fight Club star...

ON GREAT FILMS

"Have you see *Syriana*? The people who were negative seemed to complain about the same thing: 'The film is too hard to understand.' [*That's*] not the point! The point is you leave feeling overwhelmed at the how fucked we are..."

ON 'FUN' FILMS

"I'm the last person to knock entertainment. I don't think it's an opiate. It's one of the joys of life. I think *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* is a fucking hilarious movie. I mean, I laughed so hard I woke people up on the plane."

ON WORKING METHODS

"If the occasional producer or director says 'He's a pain in the ass', then, well, c'est la vie. But the best directors I've worked with seek out debate, because if there's a diamond somewhere, that's what polishes it."

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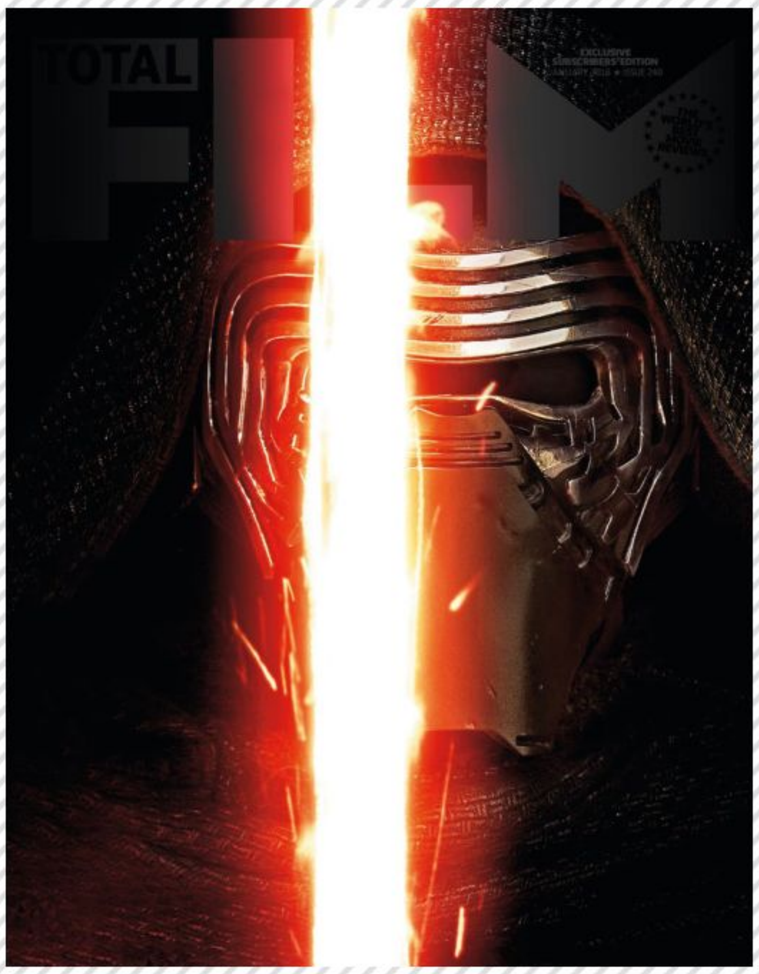
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40 YEARS OF Kenro

agenda

The One To Watch

Alexandra Daddario is hitting the beach...

"I'm really a dork... I go to the dog park in my pyjamas," says Alexandra Daddario, the 29-year-old actress who won a 'Best Scared-As-S**t Performance' MTV Award for playing final girl Heather in *Texas Chainsaw 3D*, and who is perhaps best known for Season One of *True Detective*, in which her Lisa Tragnetti handcuffs Woody Harrelson's 'tec Martin Hart before stripping down to her birthday suit.

Being asked to get bikini-ready as lifeguard Summer in the big-screen *Baywatch* reboot is unlikely to panic her, then. Daddario is the first lady in red to be cast and will play Summer (Nicole Eggert in the TV series), a fearless lifeguard who battles environmental destruction at the hands of an oil tycoon – and who gets inside the red trunks of a rule-flouting Zac Efron. Daddario also has road-trip movie *The Layover* and Nicholas Sparks adap *The Choice* in the can, but *Baywatch* is the eye-catcher.

"Extremely excited! I've been practising my slow-mo run all morning," Daddario tweeted, while co-star Dwayne Johnson, who played her dad in disaster movie *San Andreas*, took to Instagram to call her a "one of a kind woman" who would "own the role" and make it "iconic". No pressure... **JG**

ETA 2017 ***Baywatch*** **opens next year.**

THOMAS LAVELLE / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

The need-to-know...

THE NICE GUYS

It's hard to imagine *The Nice Guys* will finish last by anyone's estimation. For one thing, it's Shane Black's first film since delivering the blockbuster goods for Marvel with *Iron Man 3*. *The Nice Guys* sees the writer-director back in familiar territory, with hardboiled noir plotting, electric dialogue and a potentially cracking double act in the form of Russell Crowe and Ryan Gosling. The pair team up to solve a mystery in the sleazy '70s, and if the trailer's anything to go by, they'll have chemistry to burn, with Crowe's brawn-for-hire Jackson Healy looking like his best role in years.





TRAINSPOTTING 2

Danny Boyle's long-anticipated sequel is finally shooting this year, 20 years after the original arrived on the scene and gave British cinema a kick up the arse. Picking up with the key characters from the original, the sequel will be based on Irvine Welsh's follow-up novel *Porno* (although you can expect the movie to have a more multiplex-friendly title). Ewan McGregor, Robert Carlyle, Jonny Lee Miller and Ewen Bremner are all set to reprise their roles. "It's been 20 years since we met these characters and John Hodge's screenplay brilliantly explores what's happened to them – and to us – in the intervening years," says Boyle.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

If you're hungry for more horror after watching *The Witch* this March, this little out-of-season chiller – starring *The Walking Dead*'s Sarah Wayne Callies – might fill a gap.

SOFIA BOUTELLA



The high-kicking breakout star of *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, Sofia Boutella is reporting for duty on *Star Trek Beyond*, then she'll star as the titular villain in Universal's monster reboot of *The Mummy*.



IRON FIST

With *Jessica Jones* matching *Daredevil* for critical acclaim, the next hero is gearing up to join Marvel's small-screen universe on Netflix. While the lead role of Danny Rand/ Iron Fist has yet to be cast, the series has a showrunner in the form of *Dexter*'s Scott Buck. "I've always been drawn to writing complex, intriguing characters," he says.

VALERIAN



After scoring the biggest hit of his career with *Lucy*, Luc Besson's sci-fantasy *Valerian And The City Of A Thousand Planets* continues to expand its cast. Ethan Hawke and John Goodman are joining Cara Delevingne, Dane DeHaan and Rihanna, which should give the film four-quadrant appeal. It's slated to be the most expensive EU production ever.

PA

The scale

ON FIRE



Ryan Coogler After delivering a knockout blow with the critical and commercial success of *Creed*, the *Fruitvale Station* director is in line to direct Black Panther's solo film for Marvel.



Alicia Vikander Seen as a lock for an Oscar nod for *The Danish Girl*, Vikander's not disappearing any time soon: she's currently working on *Bourne 5*, and she'll star in Wim Wenders' next with James McAvoy.



***Hunger Games* prequels** Lionsgate is planning arena-based spin-offs to extend the life of its franchise. No J-Law, however. "I wouldn't be involved," she says. "I think it's too soon."



Dinosaurs *Jurassic World* might have ruled the box-office in 2014, but *The Good Dinosaur* proved that prehistoric doesn't mean untouchable, as Pixar's latest underwhelmed at the box office.



Rob Schneider Remarkably, he's still working, but his Netflix series has been panned, and the less said about *The Ridiculous 6* the better. Next up for Schneider is polar-bear voice work in *Norm Of The North*.

COOLING OFF

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Cool and calm: Shu Qi is ready for any attack and (below) director Hou Hsiao-hsien braves the cold.

Blade of glory

THE ASSASSIN | A whispering rampage of revenge...

It was Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* that introduced mainstream western audiences to wuxia (wu is Chinese for 'martial art', xia is 'warrior'), a genre of fiction or film in which the skilled fighters are often capable of superhuman feats. Well, as belated sequel *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Sword Of Destiny* prepares to land in IMAX theatres and on Netflix in February, here is a stunning offering from acclaimed Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien to keep you going.

An intimate, intricate tale set in the 9th century during the Tang Dynasty, *The Assassin* sees a female child stolen from her family and moulded into a deadly weapon. Now a woman (Shu Qi), she is assigned to return to the district of her childhood and kill Lord Tian Ji'an (Chang Chen), to whom she was once betrothed...

"I think that a female assassin is more special than a male one," shrugs director Hou, as it is customary to address him, via an interpreter. He is sipping tea in London, fresh from a stint on the jury of the 72nd Venice International Film Festival. "There is a Tang Dynasty assassin series [*of novels*] in which there are a lot of female assassins. I read all the kung fu novels when I was 11 or 12 years old. I think they are quite fascinating."

Compared to most wuxia movies that have impacted on western audiences (Zhang Yimou's *The House Of Flying Daggers* and *Hero*, Wong Kar-wai's *The Grandmaster*), *The Assassin* is tranquil and poised. The action, when it erupts, is beautifully choreographed but over in a blink of an eye, with Hou favouring nature (mist-wreathed lakes, breeze-stirred forests) and ear-tickling sound design (the twang of bow strings, the swish of blades) over arcing blood.

'You can't just kill everything you want to kill. You have to choose'

To be fair, this legendary filmmaker was never going to make a genre film without bending it to his will – humanist masterpieces such as *A City Of Sadness*, *The Puppetmaster* and *Flowers Of Shanghai* have brought him a glut of international awards over a 35-year career, and *The Assassin* added Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival to his impressive tally.

"You can see people flying around on the roof and the wall. I don't want that, I want to show the limitations of gravity," says Hou of his particular take on presenting wuxia, which was 10 years in the making. "I still want to focus on the people, the characters – their characteristics, their limitations. I don't want to use very dramatic plots. *The Assassin* is anti-assassin, because you can't just kill everything you want to kill – you still have to choose, in some circumstances."

Translation? This is a martial arts movie that cuts deep like few others. **JG**

ETA | 22 JANUARY *The Assassin* opens this month.

agenda

Tessa Thompson is ready to go the distance.

You might remember her from *Selma*. You'll definitely remember her from *Dear White People*. Now Tessa Thompson is enjoying her blockbuster breakout with *Creed*, in which the 32-year-old is no passive bystander to the film's heavyweight bromance. "My favourite *Rocky*?" she asks. "The first one. Then *Rocky IV*. It ended the Cold War!"

Were you a *Rocky* fan before *Creed*?
I wasn't a huge fan as such, but there were things I remembered – like in the original, when he's in the pet store talking to Adrian, that was the first time I understood what it looks like when a guy's trying to flirt with you; sort of bumbling around, making dumb jokes and finding excuses to engage with you.

How did you land the role of Bianca?
I met [*director*] Ryan Coogler at Sundance, when I was there with *Dear White People*. Aaron Covington – his co-writer – said that when they saw that movie, he tapped Ryan and went, "Bianca." I loved *Fruitvale Station* and was dead set on working with Ryan, so when I heard he was making this movie *Creed* I called my agent and said I want to be in it. I didn't even know what it was!

You've got J.J. Abrams' TV reboot of *Westworld* coming up...
There's so much secrecy; it's funny, the cast sort of circle each other to see who has information. The one thing I can say about it is that it asks a pretty human question – if we don't think there's a cost to our behaviour, how do we behave?

You're also in John Michael McDonagh's *War On Everyone*...
It's a cop heist story. It's much lighter than *Calvary* – it's sort of in the world of *The Guard*; supersmart and really irreverent. **ML**

ETA | 15 JANUARY *Creed* opens this month.



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The Talent

'I was dead set on working with Ryan Coogler'

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Four's company: Ralph Fiennes, Dakota Johnson, Tilda Swinton and Matthias Schoenaerts team up for director Luca Guadagnino's complex love-square.

Pool party

A BIGGER SPLASH | Agenda dives in headfirst with the sexiest remake of the year.

Ralph Fiennes is coked-up and jiving to 'Emotional Rescue', the best Dad dancing you'll ever see. Tilda Swinton has lost her voice. Dakota Johnson is lounging in her bikini. And Matthias Schoenaerts is looking hacked off. This is just one of the killer scenes in *A Bigger Splash*, the sizzling, sun-kissed new film from Italian director Luca Guadagnino (*I Am Love*).

"This movie," he says, "was a chance to talk about a suffocating circle of desire." Come again? "A quadrangular, inescapable 'playfield' of desire." OK, that might sound pretentious but *A Bigger Splash* is actually a sharp, sexy remake of Jacques Deray's 1969 film *La Piscine*, which starred Alain Delon and Romy Schneider. "It's a re-interpretation," clarifies Belgian star Schoenaerts, who plays Paul, a doc-maker caught up in this oddball quadrangle.

Set on the remote arid Italian island of Pantelleria, Paul is enjoying sun, sea and some other things with Swinton's Bowie-esque glam rocker Marianne Lane when their holiday is interrupted by Fiennes' motor-mouth record producer Harry Hawkes and his daughter Penny (Johnson). Sexual intrigue and jealousy run riot as Hawkes flirts with old flame Lane, voiceless due to a recent operation, while the provocative Penny and Paul draw closer together.

"It's a great bunch, right?" smirks Schoenaerts. "Tilda Swinton, Ralph Fiennes, Dakota. It's like the Champions League!" He admits that shooting for two months in the Mediterranean was as close to a holiday as you can get. "To some extent it was – because that's part of what the story tells. Of course that was an aspect of our day-to-day life, as we shot the film. Then again, we worked."

'It's a quadrangular inescapable playfield of love and desire'

Undoubtedly, the show-stopping moment is Fiennes disco-dancing to the Stones. The actor worked for months on the routine, despite its improvisational look; Guadagnino says he wanted to remind audiences of Vincente Minnelli musicals "in which there are long takes... Instead of those close-ups where you don't see the actual act of dancing that you see in films like *Black Swan*".

With its title taken from David Hockney's watery painting of the same name, the freewheeling '60s and '70s are immediately brought to mind – not least via the image of the sequin-dressed Marianne Lane, "a figure of her times", as Guadagnino puts it. "I think David Bowie was really himself when he was Ziggy Stardust but I don't think that Marianne Lane was really that. She changes masks all the time." Although *A Bigger Splash* crosses over with real life, it wasn't simply a case of, "'Let's make a movie about celebrities'", admits the director. "I think it's about the public persona and the private persona, and the fracture between these things. It's about reinventing yourself." **JM**

ETA | 12 FEBRUARY ***A Bigger Splash*** **opens next month.**

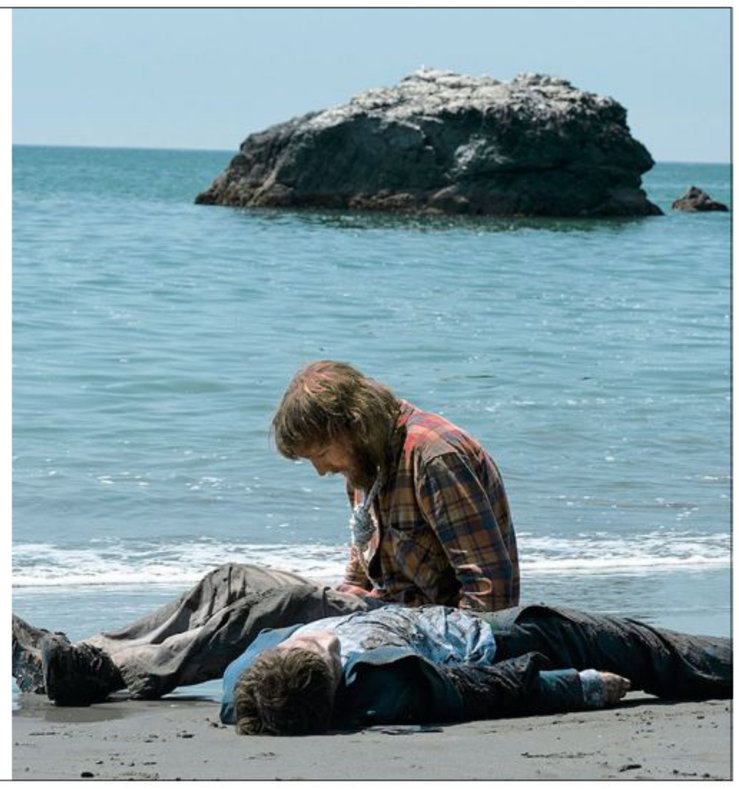
Snow stoppers

Festival Preview

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL | Ten films from the Utah fest destined to be future hits...

SWISS ARMY MAN

Daniel Radcliffe last hit Sundance in 2013, when he destroyed his *Harry Potter* image with *Kill Your Darlings*, so this second appearance at the fest is an exciting prospect. Radcliffe stars in *Swiss Army Man* alongside fest regulars Mary Elizabeth Winstead and Paul Dano, and while plot details are under wraps, we know the film's an absurdist comedy in which a man living in the wilderness befriends a dead body. First-time directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert – collectively known as 'The Daniels' – have previously directed episodes of *Funny Or Die*, so we're imagining *Weekend At Bernie's* meets *Stand By Me*.





TALLULAH

Eight years after *Juno*, Ellen Page and Allison Janney are back together for *Tallulah*, a dramatic comedy in which Page's titular homeless woman takes a baby from a neglectful mother and decides to raise her as her own. She's aided by Janney as her ex-boyfriend's mother, but when Tallulah decides to return the baby to its mother, the three women form an unlikely bond. The film marks the feature debut of Sian Heder, who worked as a writer on *Orange Is The New Black*, so this should be a sharp, funny portrayal of unconventional female relationships.



YOGA HOSERS

Described by Kevin Smith as a tween girl version of *Bill & Ted*, *Yoga Hosers* is the second instalment in his 'True North Trilogy', which began with *Tusk* and will end with *Moose Jaws*. Starring the director's daughter Harley Quinn Smith alongside Lily-Rose Melody Depp (daughter of Johnny, who reprises his *Tusk* character, Detective Guy Lapointe), it sees the two girls uncovering an ancient evil living under their convenience store, which coincides with an invite to a party. "I didn't even know I wanted to act until my dad said he wrote this movie," the younger Smith said. "I had the time of my life doing it."



THE LURE

If you thought mermaids were all about singing crabs and wooing Disney princes, this Polish curio should shake that image up a little. Set in the 1980s, it sees mer-sisters Silver and Gold get caught up in Warsaw's dance scene. When they join band Figs And Dates they become a smash hit, but after forgetting their true nature, heartbreak provides a devastating reminder. Directed by Agnieszka Smoczyńska (who comes from the documentary side of the industry), with an intriguing premise and some ravishing imagery, this should definitely be one of the most original entries at the fest.

THE INTERVENTION

Though she's best known for films like *The Faculty*, as well as recent appearances in *Argo* and *American Horror Story: Asylum*, Clea DuVall is getting behind the camera for the first time with *The Intervention*, in which two couples go on vacation only to discover the trip's a cover for a marital intervention. "I feel superstitious talking about it, but it's kind of a comedy I guess," said DuVall, whose cast includes the likes of Melanie Lynskey, Alia Shawkat and Cobie Smulders. "Not like a slapstick comedy or anything, but it's more a comedic sort of very real-life story."



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MILES AHEAD

Don Cheadle takes a creative approach to the life of Miles Davis with this unconventional biopic, in which Cheadle directs and stars as the jazz musician. Described as part heist movie, part biopic, *Miles Ahead* is set during the five years Davis took a break in the 1970s, when he takes reporter Dave Braden (Ewan McGregor) on a road trip he'll never forget. "I wanted to make a movie that I think Miles Davis would have wanted to star in," says Cheadle. Also along for the ride: Michael Stuhlbarg (*Boardwalk Empire*) as a nefarious producer, and *Short Term 12* star Keith Stanfield as his protege.





LOVESONG

After her riveting turn as brash contestant Johanna in the *Hunger Games* films, Jena Malone looks set to deliver a riveting performance in this road trip drama. She plays Mindy, whose friend Sarah (Riley Keough, last seen battling the apocalypse as one of Immortan Joe's wives in *Mad Max: Fury Road*) takes her on a road trip that alters their relationship. Director So Yong Kim last attended the festival in 2012 with *For Ellen*, which featured a blistering turn from Paul Dano. "She's an incredible director," Malone says. Could this be one of the actress' finest roles? It's looking good.



CERTAIN WOMEN

Director Kelly Reichardt (*Meek's Cutoff*, *Wendy And Lucy*) reunites with Michelle Williams for their third film together. Inspired by the stories of author Maile Meloy, the film follows three women – played by Williams, plus Laura Dern and Kristen Stewart – as they attempt to make a living in small-town America. Reichardt's track record suggests a sensitive study with fantastic performances – Dern's hot off her Oscar nomination for *Wild*, and Williams has never been a stranger to the Academy. In a year in which Sundance is really celebrating female talent, *Certain Women* should lead the pack.



CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

"It sounds like a superhero movie, but it's a tongue-in-cheek title," Viggo Mortensen offers of this parental drama, in which he plays a single father tasked with raising six children. Living in the forests of the Pacific Northwest, he brings them up using a strict regime of physical and mental exercise. That all changes, though, when he's forced to re-enter society, where his notion of parenthood is challenged. "It was very much a labour of love," Mortensen adds of the film, directed by Matt Ross, who's best known for his roles in *American Psycho* and *Face/Off*.



SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

The first of two films Chloë Sevigny has at this year's Sundance Film Festival (the other being horror flick *Antibirth* alongside *Orange Is The New Black* star Natasha Lyonne), *Love And Friendship* is the fifth film from director Whit Stillman (*The Last Days Of Disco*, *Damsels In Distress*). Set in the 1790s and based on Jane Austen's novella, It stars Sevigny opposite Kate Beckinsale, whose Lady Susan Vernon goes to stay with her in-laws, and whose plans to find a husband for herself and her daughter are complicated by the arrival of Reginald DeCourcy (Xavier Samuel) and Sir James Martin (Tom Bennett). **JW**

ETA | 21-31 JANUARY The Sundance Film Festival begins this month.



The Spotlight

Family misfortunes

Paper girl: Dheepan (Antonythasan Jesuthasan) reads with pretend daughter Illayaal (Claudine Vinasithamby).

DHEEPAN | Fighting to survive in Jacques Audiard's gritty Palme d'Or winner...

Talk about a hot streak. After scoring international hits with *The Beat That My Heart Skipped*, *A Prophet* and *Rust And Bone*, French writer/director Jacques Audiard now serves up *Dheepan*, a social-realist movie shot through with thriller elements that arrives on UK shores having plundered the coveted Palme d'Or award at Cannes.

Dheepan (Antonythasan Jesuthasan) is a Tamil Tiger who teams up with a woman, Yalini (Kalieaswari Srinivasan), and a child, Illayaal (Claudine Vinasithamby), to escape the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war. They pretend to be a family and are granted passage to Paris. But as this makeshift clan develop real bonds, they find their lives threatened once more as a drug war explodes on their housing project...

While Brit viewers might see the ghost of *Harry Brown* in *Dheepan*, Audiard views it as a companion piece to *A Prophet*. "The connection is the environment," he says, placing his natty straw fedora on the sofa beside him. "It was jail there, it's the housing projects here. Crime. But whereas [*Malik in* A Prophet] had to learn to be violent, Dheepan must unlearn violence. There are so many connections. So much so, at a certain point I thought of not making this one. But as soon as I had the love story of this fake family that turns into a real family, I was able to find this movie."

Audiard talks of the "grappling of feelings", and it's a thread that runs through all of his movies: characters wrestle for their souls. Performances are always outstanding, and *Dheepan* is no different.

'As soon as I had the love story, I was able to find this movie'

"We looked for the actors in the [*French*] Tamil community, and that's where we found Antony – who's not an actor, he's a writer, a novelist – and the little girl," Audiard explains. "But we couldn't find the actress. So the casting director went to India, and that's where he found her. She's a stage actress."

The film, Audiard's seventh, deals unblinkingly with the immigrant experience, though its stark reality is littered with impressionistic flourishes and the climactic confrontation is surprisingly stylised. It would be remiss to say any more here, but Audiard's bold decisions clearly chimed with a Cannes jury presided over by Joel and Ethan Coen. The director claims to have been surprised by *Dheepan*'s victory, as he is with any triumph.

"If someone had told me *A Prophet* would have been so successful in so many territories, I would never have believed it," he smiles. "Of course, with *Rust And Bone* it was slightly different because we had a very well-known star in Marion Cotillard. But commercial success is not important for me. I don't think about it beforehand."

Think about it or not, it keeps on coming. **JG**



ETA | 4 MARCH *Dheepan* opens this spring.

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Doctor's orders

Will Peter Jackson direct an episode of *Doctor Who*? *The Lord Of The Rings* helmer's TARDIS debut has been long mooted, but showrunner Steven Moffat has previously claimed "It would have to be when he's available – and I don't think he's even been available to answer our emails of late!" Jackson recently posted a witty riposte video on Facebook, in which he's polishing his Oscars as Peter Capaldi's Doctor and a Dalek invade his living room. About timey-wimey... **MM**

ETA | TBC Peter Jackson's *Doctor Who* episode is yet to be confirmed.

Plain talking

Learn the movie lingo

This month:

"Melodrama"

Emotions are generally exaggerated in melodramas, often at the cost of realism, so the term can be pejorative: a screechy, unsubtle performance might be deemed melodramatic. But in recent years the 1950s melodramas of Douglas Sirk have found new appreciation, and Todd Haynes has aped the style to considerable effect in the likes of *Far From Heaven* and *Carol*.

ILLUSTRATION: GLEN BROGAN; PICTURE CREDIT: REX FEATURES



Career injection

ARMIE HAMMER | Is the former Lone Ranger a blunt tool, or could maverick intervention sharpen up his act?

Chin of an anvil, eyes like the sea, face that could launch a thousand grooming kits, name like a Marvel A-lister. In stardom's game, his words as Cameron Winklevoss seem to fit: "Is there any way to make this a fair fight?" Yet in Armie Hammer's career, victory hasn't panned out as hoped.

Hammer somehow managed to snag our sympathy through surface shows of entitled indignation as the Winklevi twins in David Fincher's *The Social Network*, but elsewhere misfortune – in part, at least – has scuppered his bids for graduation glory. Unlike actors who build up audience bonds through TV, Hammer had to settle for single-ep stints on *Arrested Development*, *Desperate Housewives* and *Veronica Mars*. He might have given good chin as Batman in George Miller's canned *Justice League*, but the movie became one of cinema's great 'What ifs'. And he might have given good kiss-curl in McG's proposed/canned *Superman* relaunch, but then again... McG.

Yet even better luck hasn't helped him fly. Hammer's aged-up Clyde Tolson never quite pierced the stagey trappings of *J Edgar*. He played the dreamboat in *Mirror Mirror*, only to stall in straight-man mode while Julia Roberts had all the fun. When he did get to punch a potential franchise card, he was saddled with another stiff...

He wasn't the main problem with Disney's costly flop but he looked lost in *The Lone Ranger*, stranded between straight-arrow hero and camp lug. Making matters worse, lightning missed twice with *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* – Guy Ritchie mustered all the style of a shaving ad for his '60s spy romp, but his failure to tease distinct turns from Henry Cavill and Hammer was the bigger blunder.

And that's the issue: the lack of any real USP. Hammer can be charming and self-aware, almost Clooney-ish, but he's never had a chance to startle. Whether or not you put that down to the kind of privileged background (his great gramps was an oil man) that can turn charm to smarm and make an actor look over-comfortable in themselves, he hasn't reached outside his box since Fincher made him learn to row.

Since he hasn't earned that audience bond, he needs to ditch roles that rely on him being really ridiculously good-looking and prove he can really act. If he's to shock us, an off-piste role for an unruly director is needed. Could Ben Wheatley's *Free Fire* be Hammer's time? **KH**

FIVE POINT FIX...

1 Get an auteur to dismantle his image, like David Cronenberg remixing R-Pattz in *Cosmopolis*.

2 Approach reboots cautiously. Think carefully about the lessons learned via the *Ranger*/*U.N.C.L.E.* flops: fresher bids are called for.

3 Be unlikeable, like Tom Cruise in *Magnolia*. That smoothie charm needs soiling a bit.

4 Be ridiculous, like Clooney for the Coens. Mocking those matinee-idol looks could well disarm audience resistance.

5 Struggle in the indie/ensemble trenches. He's only 29: work back up to the headline gigs.



Diane Lane

The screen siren turns super-woman...

Hanging out with Olivier on *A Little Romance* and Cruise on *The Outsiders*, Oscar nominated for *Unfaithful*, playing Supes' adoptive mother in *Man Of Steel*... Diane Lane's career is as eclectic as it is electric. This month, Lane returns as wife to Bryan Cranston's communist screenwriter in *Trumbo* before reprising Martha Kent in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*.

What did you think of Dalton Trumbo and his wife Cleo?
He possessed so many qualities. But he seemed to be having lofty ideals, and he was willing to elucidate them very clearly through his screenplays or [*his novel*] *Johnny Got His Gun*... He was working things out that were part of our culture and our political system. Cleo, though, was physically confident and emotionally present. She was the perfect compliment and opposite to her husband... And she adored him!

Were you a fan of Bryan Cranston before working with him?
Oh yes. He's so seasoned and has so much to offer. After *Breaking Bad*, you want to see what he'll follow that up with. He's very astute and he's very full of heart at the same time.

It's been a great year for you too, voicing the mother in Pixar's wonderful *Inside Out*...
Isn't it beautiful? I was crying and laughing and exhilarated and amazed that I was in it, in any form. I was so delighted to be a part of that. I play a fair amount of moms now. That's what women do – they tend to become moms. And so I'm looking at all these great moms that I play. They're amazing women.

Diamond Diane: (top to bottom) in *Unfaithful* (2002), *Man Of Steel* (2013) and with Bryan Cranston in *Trumbo*.



'It never entered my mind that I'd get an Oscar nomination'

You are probably the ultimate mother, raising Superman in *Man Of Steel*...
I always said if I had a son that would be the ultimate test. Raise a good man – there's something noble about that.

How was it reuniting with Zack Snyder on *Batman V Superman*?
I'm endlessly impressed with his imagination. Who gets offered the opportunity to bring such things to the screen for millions of people? That's tremendous. It's an honour and a burden and I can't imagine shouldering that load. He also has a whole bunch of children – he's a force of nature. He's got his plate full and he likes it that way.

You've also just made *Bonjour Anne* with Eleanor Coppola. How was that?
It was exhilarating to empower her vision. I was grateful to be asked. I've known her since I was 17, and this is her feature debut – talk about a late bloomer! It's a week out of a woman's life [*that*] opens her eyes and makes her reconsider life. And there's a lot of food in it. A *lot* of food!

What do you remember about making *The Outsiders* with Eleanor's husband, Francis Coppola?
Well, I read Rob Lowe's book. And it was interesting. One third of it is devoted to *The Outsiders* and his experience and what that brought into his life. His memory... He was so present. Maybe he was drinking stronger coffee than I was. He was so hyper-aware of everything and his memories are so crystal. But, yes, I have very strong memories of that time... It was a seminal experience. We were this weird blend of hyper-insecure and hyper-over-confident!

You were Oscar nominated for *Unfaithful*. How did that make you feel?
Completely blown away. It's not a politically correct role and it came out in May. It was very surprising. It never entered my mind in a million years that something like that would come my way – and not for that role. **JM**

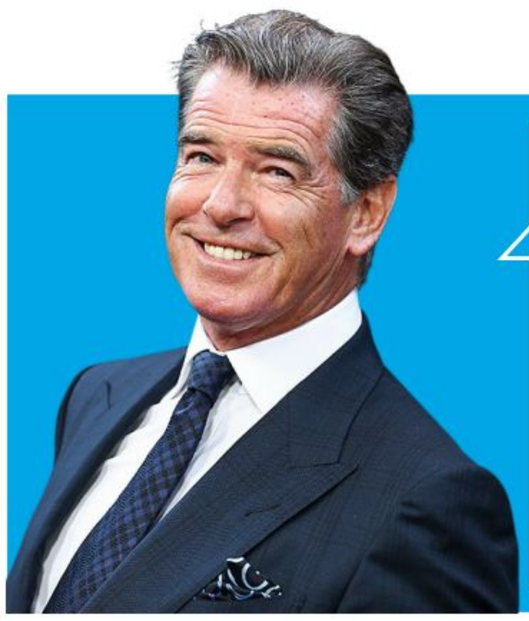
ETA | 5 FEBRUARY *Trumbo* opens next month.

GETTY

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Sound bites

Quotable dialogue from this month's movies – and their stars...



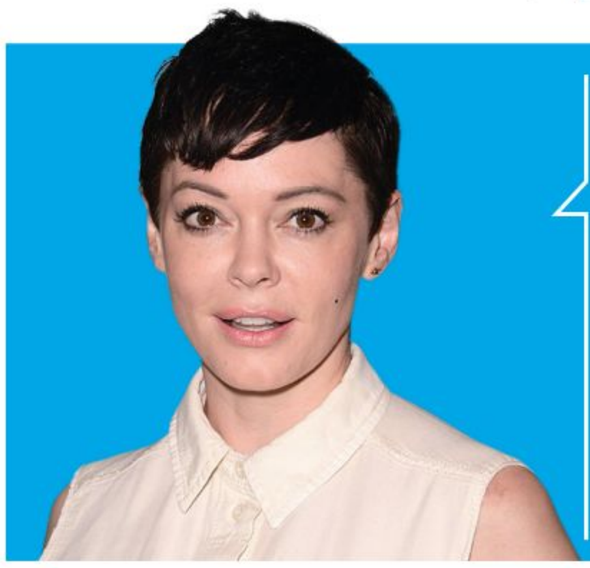
"I thought [SPECTRE] was too long. The story was kind of weak – it could have been condensed."
Pierce Brosnan weighs in on the latest Bond movie.

"Tell me the difference between stupid and illegal and I'll have my wife's brother arrested."
Jared Vennett **(Ryan Gosling)** is a straight-talker in *The Big Short*.



"It's true [*about the feud*]. Because Channing Tatum does not like me – and for many reasons, many being my own fault." **Alex Pettyfer** discusses the *Magic Mike* cast fallout.





"Honestly, it got so boring in front of the camera I had to quit."
Rose McGowan is taking a break.

"Oh fk you, Eddie, in your brilliant costume. I got jeans and a zip top for 10 years and you've got a great coat already?"**
Daniel Radcliffe is envious of Eddie Redmayne's *Potter*-verse costume.



"You don't use it unless you are Sir King Bensley."
Dame Maggie Smith doesn't use her noble title on set.

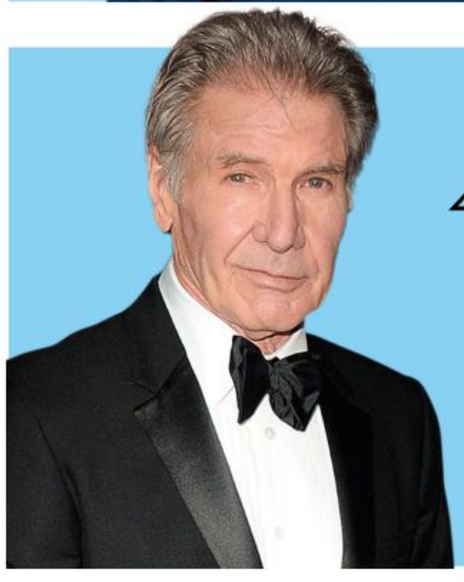


"That's the toughest opponent you're ever going to have to face."
Rocky Balboa **(Sylvester Stallone)** squares off with the man in the mirror in *Creed*.



"If security beats you up, you're doing your job right."
Jane **(Sandra Bullock)** gives a motivational speech in *Our Brand Is Crisis*.





"I'd love to do another *Indiana Jones* and work with Steven [*Spielberg*] again – if we get a script, I'd love to do it."
Harrison Ford on returning to his *other* big franchise.

"I ain't afraid to die anymore. I've done it already."
Hugh Glass **(Leonardo DiCaprio)** seeks vengeance in *The Revenant*.



PA IMAGES

THE CHOICE

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EDITED BY **MATTHEW LEYLAND**

Every new movie reviewed & rated
Screen

★★★★★ OUTSTANDING ★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ RUBBISH

TOTAL FILM OF THE MONTH

'The Force Awakens is the movie *Star Wars* fans wanted and deserve'



NEW RELEASES 15.01.16 - 11.02.16

OUT NOW

Daddy's Home	★★	p52
The Hateful Eight	★★★★	p42
Joy	★★★★	p48
Krampus	★★★	p51
Partisan	★★★	p54
Star Wars: The Force Awakens	★★★★★	p44

15 JANUARY

Breakdown	★★	p54
Room	★★★★★	p46

22 JANUARY

The Assassin	★★★★	p51
The Big Short	★★★★	p49
The Last Diamond	★★★	p54
Lost In Karastan	★★	p53
Our Brand Is Crisis	★★	p55
The Visit: An Alien Encounter	★★★★	p49

29 JANUARY

Dirty Grandpa	★★	p55
Innocence Of Memories	★★★★	p53
One And Two	★★★	p54
Spotlight	★★★★	p50
The 33	★★★	p53
Youth	★★★★	p54

5 FEBRUARY

Goosebumps	★★★★	p52
Janis: Little Girl Blue	★★★★	p51
Lee Scratch Perry's Vision Of Paradise	★★★★	p49
Rams	★★★	p53
Trumbo	★★★	p53

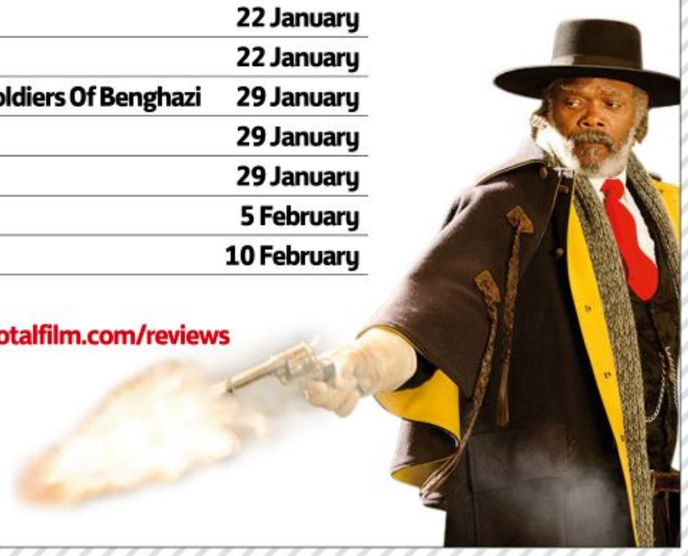
ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to gamesradar.com/totalfilm for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Dragon Blade	15 January
Ip Man 3	15 January
The 5th Wave	22 January
Ride Along 2	22 January
13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers Of Benghazi	29 January
Backtrack	29 January
Capture The Flag	29 January
Dad's Army	5 February
Deadpool	10 February

For more reviews visit totalfilm.com/reviews

QT's *The Hateful Eight* ups the tension on p42





The Hateful Eight

★★★★☆ Out now

Tarantino's gunslingers get cabin fever...

NO ONE COULD EVER accuse Quentin Tarantino of a lack of self-importance. *The Hateful Eight*, his first western if you obey his call to view *Django Unchained* as a 'southern', begins with a sketch of a horse-drawn stagecoach dwarfed by red, snowcapped mountains, the word OVERTURE printed on the screen. Said overture lasts several minutes. Ennio Morricone's music is at once lush and menacing, the full orchestral swells layered with music-box tinkles, ominous drums and grumbling horns. The mountains fade, the music dies. 'The Weinstein Company Presents' fills the screen and disappears to ensure the next title has the screen all to itself: 'The 8th Film By Quentin Tarantino.'

Stranger danger

It is, of course, all part of Tarantino's quest to make *The Hateful Eight* an event, along with the 187-minute running time, a 12-minute intermission and the decision to shoot in Ultra Panavision 70, as favoured by mid-20th-century epics like *Ben-Hur*, The *Fall Of The Roman Empire* and *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (well, if it's good enough for God...). But event or no event, you need to deliver quite the gift if you're to package it so elaborately. Thankfully, Tarantino is one generous sonofagun...

Set a few years after the American Civil War, *The Hateful Eight* tells of eight strangers holed up in a log cabin while a blizzard rages outside. We're first introduced to John Ruth (Kurt Russell) and Daisy Domergue (Jennifer Jason Leigh), the former a bounty hunter who's taking the latter, a crazed outlaw, to the town of Red Rock to hang. Their stagecoach twice encounters wandering strangers on the icy road: Major Marquis Warren (Samuel L. Jackson), a former union soldier turned bounty hunter; and then Chris Mannix (Walton Goggins), a southern renegade who's heading for Red Rock to take up the position of sheriff.

These four meet four more when the blizzard forces them to seek refuge at

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The world moustache championships suddenly got serious.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

STAGECOACH 1939
John Ford's standard-setting western follows eight strangers on a perilous journey.

AND THE THERE WERE NONE 1974
An isolated group's numbers drop one by one. *The Hateful Eight* is Agatha Christie with guns.

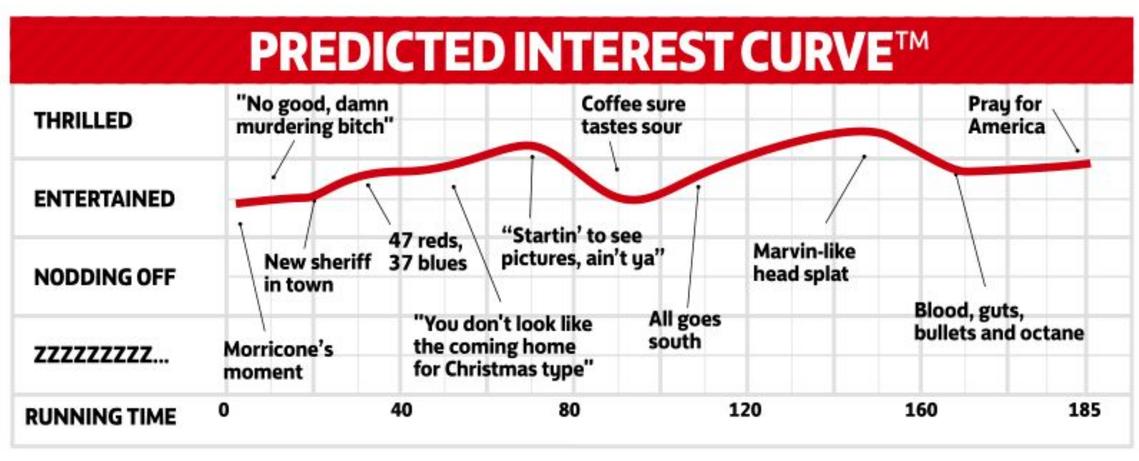
RESERVOIR DOGS 1992
Colour-coded crims rendezvous in a warehouse to argue it out after a botched heist.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

'This is Tarantino's most mature outing since *Jackie Brown*'

Minnie's Haberdashery in deepest Wyoming. Inside is Bob (Demian Bichir), a Mexican who's looking after the joint while Minnie visits her mother, plus Red Rock's flamboyant English hangman Oswaldo Mobray (Tim Roth), taciturn cowboy Joe Gage (Michael Madsen) and Confederate General Sanford 'Don't Give a Damn' Smithers (Bruce Dern). As Mobray crows, "Looks like Minnie's Haberdashery is about to get cosy for the next few days..."

With Robert Richardson's camera now locked on to (into?) this veritable vipers' nest – only rare slogs to the stable or outhouse, and a magnificent flashback at a key moment, allow for the pristine 70mm to take in the great outdoors – part of the fun is trying to figure out who'll bite first. Tarantino's verbiage unspools, heavy on exposition but as satisfying to suck on as the oversized pipes wielded by these grizzled characters. It's quickly apparent that backstories entwine, loyalties exist, grievances lurk. But just who is in cahoots with whom? It's a tricksy business made all the more slippery by ever-shifting character dynamics, on-a-dime mood flips and genre switcheroos: western to murder mystery to grand guignol farce.



Pushing Daisy

The Hateful Eight is by no means as tight and dynamic as *Reservoir Dogs* – it again evidences the writer/director's migration to novelistic filmmaking, replete with chapter headings, snatches of narrative voiceover and leisurely pacing – but it's a superior entertainment that marks Tarantino's most mature outing since *Jackie Brown*. Themes that have always percolated in his work bubble to the surface, with the post-Civil War timeframe facilitating an openly political film. "Only time black folks are safe is when white folks are disarmed," comes Warren's riposte to the endless racial slurs hatefully tossed his way, most of them from Mannix. The action might be set in the 1870s but its musings on race and guns are still depressingly relevant, and, for all its narrative twists, exploding heads and flickers of anachronistic music (The White Stripes' 'Apple Blossom', David Hess' plaintive 'Now You're All Alone' from *The Last House On The Left*), it frequently offers an unusually sombre tone.

As for the performances, they're anything but hateful, with Jackson, Roth and Leigh stealing the show. The wide lensing means several characters are normally in any one shot, tucked into the deepest, darkest corners of the cabin, and the cast's relish of the theatricality of Tarantino's dialogue fits perfectly given the characters each don masks to hide their true purpose. Leigh especially deserves awards attention, somehow maintaining Daisy's mischievous glint through a series of punishing ordeals, with her face variously punched, soaked in stew, vomited on and drenched in splattered brains. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT *The Hateful Eight* brands the western with a big 'QT'. All you'd expect from a Tarantino movie and more besides. Saddle up.

› **Certificate** 18 **Director** Quentin Tarantino **Starring** Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Tim Roth, Bruce Dern **Screenplay** Quentin Tarantino **Distributor** Entertainment **Running time** 187 mins

***NB:** This is a review of the full-length 70mm 'roadshow' cut. The wide release excludes the overture and intermission, and will be shown digitally.*



Star Wars: The Force Awakens

★★★★★ Out now

J.J. stays on target...

BLUE LETTERS ON black: 'A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...' And then: *STAR WARS*. If that doesn't elicit goosebumps, the receding crawl that follows – straightforward, enticing, with not a jot of gobbledegook about trade tariffs – thrillingly echoes the openers of the original trilogy.

This is old-school stuff, pitched just right, and so it is with most of the film that follows. Forget the overstuffed, over-polished, over-pixelated, underwhelming prequels by George Lucas. The look and *feel* of J.J. Abrams' seventh episode in the beloved space saga is just what fans have been waiting for since 1983's *Return Of The Jedi*. It's time to party like an Ewok: the Force is strong with this one.

But back to that crawl. Luke Skywalker, the last Jedi, has vanished; the First Order has risen from the ashes of the Empire; and the Resistance's (née Rebellion) General Leia Organa (Carrie Fisher) has sent her most daring pilot to the planet of Jakku to sniff out Luke's trail (we're paraphrasing here). That pilot is Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac). He'll team up with Finn (John Boyega), an AWOL Stormtrooper, and the pair will go in search of Dameron's BB-8 droid, conveyor of a galactic map that might just lead to Luke.

Upon Jakku, scavenging to survive, resides Rey (Daisy Ridley), the at-first-dubious-but-increasingly-proud owner of (you guessed it) BB-8. But no sooner have Rey and BB-8 started to roll together than they find themselves targeted by a death squad. "Stop holding my hand!" Rey yells at Finn, who's turned up in the nick of time to drag her to safety. Pointedly, thrillingly, she then grabs his hand to haul him into a rusting ship, their only hope of escape. It is, wouldn't you know it, the Millennium Falcon, and Rey, a capable pilot, miraculously escapes a pair of TIE fighters while flying past, and then through, a downed Imperial Star Destroyer in a stunning set-piece.

Ren of iniquity

If any of this sounds convoluted – and we haven't even mentioned the First Order's Big Bads General Hux (Domhnall Gleeson) and Kylo Ren (Adam Driver), and its even Bigger Bad Supreme Leader Snoke (Andy Serkis, mo-capping once more) – it's not. Abrams and co-writers Lawrence Kasdan (who co-wrote *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*) and Michael Arndt (*Toy Story 3*, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*) bring clarity and purity to the storytelling, returning to the part-mythological, part-Saturday-serial vibe of *A New Hope*.

The images, too, are uncomplicated and unfussy. Just as Abrams jettisons the antiseptic sheen of the prequels in favour

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Stormtrooper accuracy being what it is, they might as well stand still.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

STAR WARS: EPISODE IV – A NEW HOPE 1977
The blueprint for the gorgeously crafted new instalment. J.J. studied it closely.

STAR TREK 2009
Here's one he made earlier... Abrams jump-starts a flagging flagship franchise.

SUPER 8 2011
J.J's loving tribute to '70s and '80s Spielburbia. Innocence and awe to trigger goosebumps.

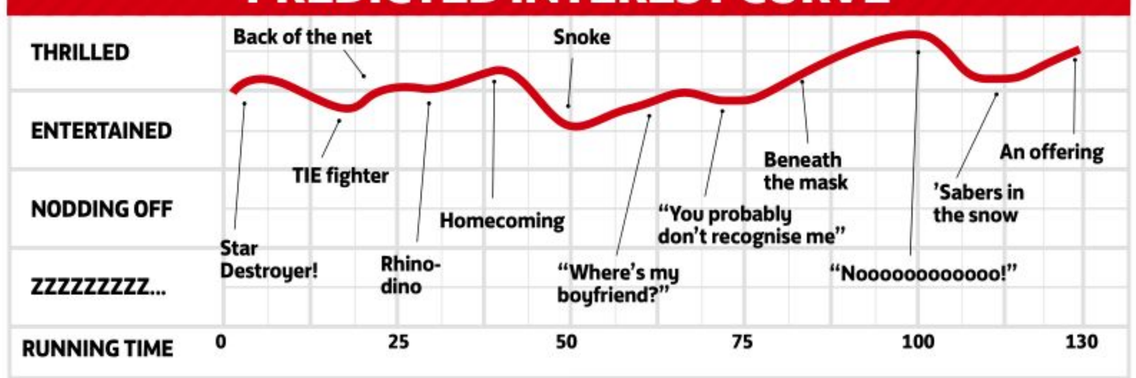
For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

'J.J. Abrams' seventh episode is just what fans have waited for'

of the clunky, lived-in world of the originals, and uses CGI more to take away than to add (opting for practical effects and props wherever possible), so he refrains from the kamikaze camera and ADD-cutting of so many modern blockbusters. Yes, there's a mobility and immediacy to the battles that wasn't possible 30 years ago, but this never jars, always serves story. The use of irises and wipe-edits, meanwhile, is adopted for house style.

Of the new triangle of characters, Boyega brings intensity and a surprisingly honed comic timing ("I *love* the Resistance," he gabbles when Rey asks him if that's who he's with); Isaac is amiable and handsome and a welcome throwback in his effortless derring-do; and Ridley, always likeable, overcomes initial woodenness to handle the heavy lifting of later emotional scenes.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



Of the old triangle, here making fan-pleasing returns, Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Leia set bottom lips a-trembling whenever they share the screen, while Luke (Mark Hamill)... Well, that would be telling. Let's just say there's good reason J.J. Abrams has guarded this aspect of the plot with the tightness of a Force choke, and let us instead focus on Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew), still rocking the greatest backcomb in movies. The hairy guy has also sharpened his sense of humour over the last 32 years – his bickering double-act with Han will have you choking laughter like you're bringing up a furball.

But it's Driver's Kylo Ren who steals the show, a match for Darth Maul when sporting his car-grille mask, and something else entirely when he removes it. *Star Wars*, in many ways, is all about clearly defined lines and black and white, but this is the kind of anguish and soul-searching you'd expect in an Ingmar Bergman movie. Albeit with a really cool lightsaber.

Snoke gets in your eyes

Star Wars: The Force Awakens is not perfect nor could it ever be. But for every niggle (Snoke is pure Voldemort, one tentacular beast better belongs in *Men In Black 3*) there are 10 things that are exactly right, and it says much that no one will leave disappointed despite going in with hysterical levels of expectation.

There are images here that brand the brain: Rey dwarfed by a crashed Star Destroyer as she toboggans down a huge sand dune; Hux addressing thousands of Stormtroopers like it's some Nazi propaganda rally filmed by Leni Riefenstahl; Starkiller Base, boasting enough firepower to make the Death Star(s) look like a Zippo lighter, destroying multiple planets.

And if *Episode VII* is almost too slavishly reverential, its every sub-plot mirroring or reversing those that have gone before, and its nods and winks so plentiful as to border on the distracting... Well, better all that than to repeat Lucas' prequel mistakes.

This, undoubtedly, is the movie that fans wanted, the movie that fans deserve. And it's only fitting that it is, beneath the scintillating action and striking world-building, a film about parents and children, about the effects of one generation on the next, about legacy. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* will be viewed and passed down for many years to come. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT No need to have a bad feeling about this. J.J. Abrams' epic adventure will thrill youngsters and transport millions more back to their childhoods far, far away.

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** J.J. Abrams **Starring** Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, Adam Driver **Screenplay** Lawrence Kasdan, J.J. Abrams, Michael Arndt **Distributor** Disney **Running time** 135 mins

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Room

★★★★★ Out 15 January

Life on the inside...

YOU DON'T HAVE to be claustrophobic to be unsettled by Lenny Abrahamson's latest, a tale of love, hope and survival that confines a significant part of its action to an airless, locked outhouse. Said shed has been the home of Ma (Brie Larson) for seven years, the length of time she has been held captive by a man we know only by the demonic moniker Old Nick (Sean Bridgers). The last five of those years have been spent raising Jack (Jacob Tremblay), a little boy for whom this single room represents the world in its entirety. Jack, to state the horrifically obvious, is Old Nick's son – a child born of rape who may be Ma's only chance of salvation.

Recent scandals involving the likes of Josef Fritzl, Ariel Castro and Aravindan 'Comrade Bala' Balakrishnan have shown that *Room*'s plot, if outlandish, is anything but fanciful. Yet Abrahamson's film – adapted by Emma Donoghue from her own best-selling novel – is no lurid exploitationer but a thoughtful, at times poetic meditation on how one endures and makes bearable a nightmarish dilemma. Ma, a bit like Roberto Benigni in *Life Is Beautiful*, artfully shields her five-year-old from the ghastliness of their shared plight, filling his days instead with fun, games and exercise. Jack, for his part, gives Ma a reason to go on living a life she would have happily put an end to were he not there to be cared for.

Child's play

Room, then, is a story of mutual dependency under the bleakest conditions conceivable. But because it's told from Jack's perspective, it's rarely explicitly bleak. Never having seen or known anything else, 'Room' is no cell for Jack but a playground of possibilities: one in which Lamp and Bath and Stove are friends as much as implements, and Ma is an omnipresent, ever-adoring constant. Jack, in short, is not one to complain, even when the heat is capriciously turned off or when he's obliged to hide in Wardrobe to facilitate Old Nick's frequent visitations – encounters

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Ma (Brie Larson) and Jack (Jacob Tremblay) in the titular Room.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION
1994
Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman bond behind bars in Frank Darabont's prison saga.

SHORT TERM 12
2013
Larson's on phenomenal form in this indie about a home for troubled teens.

PRISONERS
2013
Hugh Jackman won't rest until his daughter's found in this dark tale of serial abduction.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

'Larson is terrific, but Tremblay emerges as the film's trump card'

Dame Maggie, of course, could get out of her van when she wanted to and see the world outside. That's a prospect denied to Ma and Jack until *Room*'s midway point, where it stops being a study of incarceration and becomes a thriller about a jailbreak. To disclose more would be a disservice, to both the movie and the reader. Suffice to say that what follows turns *Room* on its head, not least by introducing Brie's parents (Joan Allen and William H. Macy) into a yarn that had previously seemed destined to remain a grippingly minimalist three-hander.

Breakout role

Larson, so good in 2013's *Short Term 12*, is even better here in a role that requires her to be victim, rock and lioness, often at the same time. (The fact that Ma's actual name is Joy presents the intriguing prospect that two of this season's likely Best Actress nominees – Jennifer Lawrence being the other – will be recognised for playing like-titled heroines.) It has been a breakthrough year for the 26-year-old Sacramentan, whose appearance here comes hot on the heels of playing Amy Schumer's sister in *Trainwreck* – another mum, incidentally, who feels compelled at one stage to defend her boy's legitimacy to a coldly unwelcoming grandfather. As terrific as she is, though, it's Tremblay who emerges as the film's trump card, the adorable youngster proving both charming and heartbreaking as he charts Jack's painful passage from innocence to experience.

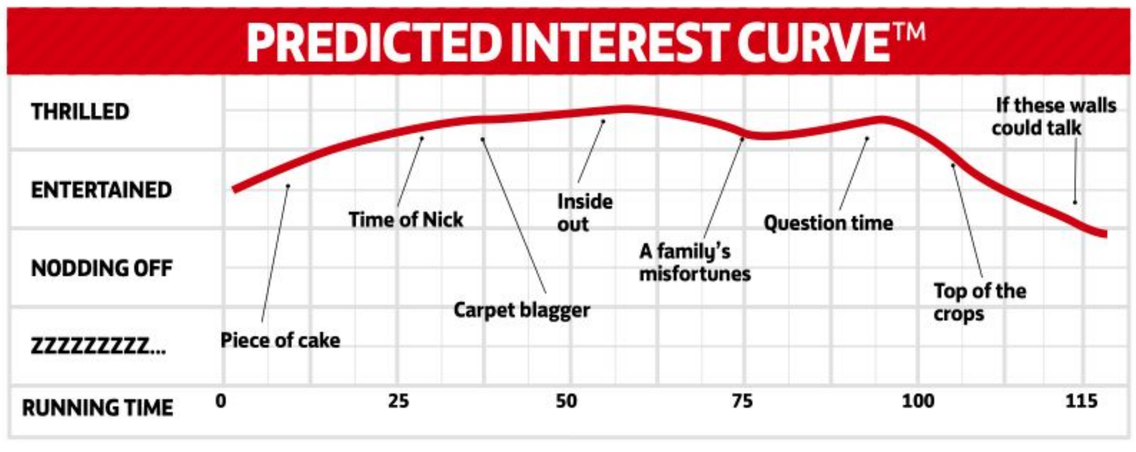
Room is a film about entrapment. Yet it's also one about liberation, about letting go of one's fears and moving on from trauma. At one point Jack asks to be shorn of the locks he has been cultivating since infancy. It's a revelatory, transformative moment in a film you won't find nearly so easy to say goodbye to. **Neil Smith**

THE VERDICT **A prize-winning page-turner becomes a moving, harrowing and redemptive drama about the ties that bind a mother to her child. Be warned: one box of tissues may not be enough.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Lenny Abrahamson **Starring** Brie Larson, Jacob Tremblay, Sean Bridgers, Joan Allen, William H. Macy **Screenplay** Emma Donoghue **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running time** 118 mins

that we, like him, do not see but only hear taking place from behind a shuttered partition. Indeed, there are times Donoghue provocatively asks if such an upbringing might even be preferable to the over-stimulated, expectation-burdened childhood that is generally considered 'normal'.

Abrahamson, like Jack, makes the best of his lot too, deploying imagination, creativity and a host of ingenious angles to make *Room* as cinematic as possible. (You wonder if he wanted to set himself a challenge comparable to the one he gave Michael Fassbender in *Frank*, a film that asked the actor to give a performance from within a papier-mâché head.) Assisted by production designer Ethan Tobman, the *What Richard Did* director makes Ma and Jack's living quarters a mutable space whose four walls abound with revealing little details. At no point, though, are we ever allowed to forget this is, in essence, a cage: a grubby, mouldy interior every bit as inviting as the one Maggie Smith inhabited in *The Lady In The Van*.





"You're *meant* to take the sheets. They're included in the price of the room!"

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS
1955
Like Russell, Douglas Sirk riffs on soapy melodramas to give us an unbreakable woman.

ERIN BROCKOVICH
2000
Soderbergh moves events along at a fair old clip, and his heroine will not take no for an answer.

WINTER'S BONE
2010
The drama that demonstrated J-Law's steely core and elevated her to the big league.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

Joy

★★★★☆ Out now

Top of the mops...

AS STEVE JOBS TAUGHT US last year, biopics don't have to be staid, predictable, cradle-to-grave dramas. Well, David O. Russell couldn't do staid if he tried. Going into this tale of Joy Mangano, the inventor of the Miracle Mop, on a serious (or rather seriocomic) hot streak that's brought us *The Fighter*, *Silver Linings Playbook* and *American Hustle*, Russell again corrals his repertory troupe of Jennifer Lawrence, Bradley Cooper and Robert De Niro, and once more marries a fizzily anarchic style to emotional substance.

Narrated, fairytale-like, by grandmother Mimi (Diane Ladd), who wishes for her granddaughter to "grow to be the successful matriarch you were born to be," Joy pitches us into the chaotic life of the eponymous divorcee (Lawrence), living with her two kids, a bed-hugging, soap-viewing mother (Virginia Madsen), said grandma, and, residing in the basement, her cantankerous father (De Niro) and unemployed ex-husband (Édgar Ramírez). She dreams of more than managing the accounts of her dad's auto shop, and has a flash of inspiration while staring at her bleeding hands after hand-wringing the mop she's used to clean up a shattered glass of red wine.

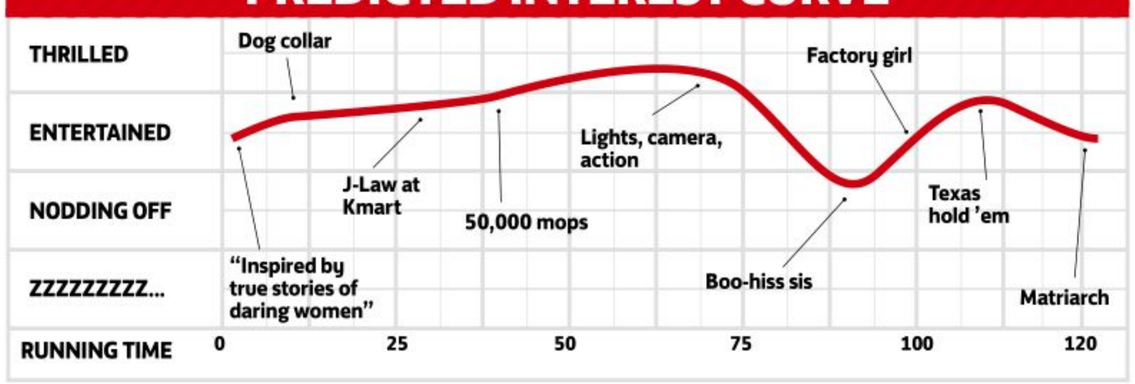
Yes, this is another of Russell's fractured, fractious families, the full chaos of their pinballing, up-to-11 lives communicated by his redeployment of a hurtling camera, jump cuts and a generous serving of hit tunes on the soundtrack. Russell's style is divisive, love it or loathe it, and many viewers might just wish he trusted in his heroine's remarkable story rather than dress it up so forcefully. Alongside flashbacks and dream sequences, he also has a penchant for cutting into scenes, and leaving them again, in unusual places.

'Lawrence gives a gritty, gutsy, bewitching performance'

Such sleight of hand fits con story *American Hustle* more snugly, and there's a sense that Russell is here straining to find his film – four editors are credited.

But find it he does, just, with any stutters galloped over with sheer brio. The ace up his sleeve, of course, is Jennifer Lawrence, giving a gritty, gutsy, bewitching performance that's the match of anything in her career. Her best scenes come when she again bounces off her *Silver Linings* and *American Hustle* co-star Cooper, here running the QVC channel that gets Joy's self-wringing Miracle Mop into American homes. But she's fine on her own, thank you very much, carrying the picture. Don't be surprised if she wipes the floor with all competition to win her second Oscar. **Jamie Graham**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



THE VERDICT Not without glitches but an energetic study of one woman's refusal to settle for anything less than her share of the American Dream.

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** David O. Russell **Starring** Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, Bradley Cooper, Virginia Madsen, Édgar Ramírez **Screenplay** David O. Russell **Distributor** 20th Century Fox **Running time** 124 mins

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The real telephone was much more effective than the invisible one.

The Big Short

★★★★☆ Out 22 January

Laughing all the way to the bank...

ON PAPER, ADAM McKAY SEEMS an unlikely choice to direct a film about the ins and outs of the recent global financial crisis. The absurd and OTT humour of *Anchorman* and *Step Brothers* doesn't immediately spring to mind when thinking about a subject that's so often dry and incomprehensible, but it turns out that his light touch and Ron Burgundy-level energy were just what the sub-genre needed.

Adapting Michael Lewis' non-fiction book, McKay wrangles a number of A-listers in an impressive ensemble. There's no lead to speak of, but the story starts in 2005 with Christian Bale's Michael Burry (a real person, while other characters have had their names changed). A possibly autistic hedge-fund manager, his running of the numbers leads him to start betting against 'subprime' mortgages after predicting a crash.

Big-bank trader Jared Vennett (Ryan Gosling) and money manager Mark Baum (Steve Carell) similarly bet against the housing market. Also in the mix is producer Brad Pitt's wordly economics guru, advising a couple of young guns who want to disrupt the unfair system. That the stars are hidden under bad-hair wigs and unflattering makeovers adds to the larger-than-life tone created by the restlessly energetic editing.

McKay knows when he needs to grab your attention. Not only does the funny-bone-tickling make *The Big Short* a far more inviting prospect than its serious, starchy counterparts, but if ever the minutiae of credit default swaps and the like threaten to become alienating, you can expect a celebrity cameo or fourth-wall breaking narration to pop up and simplify it.

The important message at the film's core is no less vital for the laughter that leavens it. It helps that the cast can switch nimbly from the broader comedic notes to genuine pathos. The acting is strong across the board, though Carell deserves special mention for averting a potential caricature with his hangdog sincerity. But be warned. For all the fun you'll have in the process, the lessons you'll learn about unlearned lessons will leave you fuming with righteous indignation. **Matt Maytum**

THE VERDICT Slick and funny, this is the year's most entertaining economics lesson, making the facts of the financial crisis easier to digest without making them any more palatable.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Adam McKay **Starring** Steve Carell, Christian Bale, Ryan Gosling, Brad Pitt, Finn Wittrock, Rafe Spall **Screenplay** Adam McKay, Charles Randolph **Distributor** Paramount **Running time** 130 mins

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

CRAZY STUPID LOVE 2011
Steve Carell's affable sadsack is the perfect foil for Ryan Gosling's alpha-male machismo.

MONEYBALL 2011
Brad Pitt produces and stars in another number-cruncher based on a book by Michael Lewis.

THE WOLF OF WALL STREET 2013
Scorsese's stockbroker biopic makes iffy investments look like a helluva lot of fun.

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THE VISIT: AN ALIEN ENCOUNTER

★★★★☆ Out 22 January

"WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF MANKIND encountered aliens?" That's the poser at the heart of this cerebral doc, which explores the prospect as science fact rather than science fiction. Experts and military advisors discuss in practical terms what the protocol would be for communicating with extra-terrestrial life, but filmmaker Michael Madsen (not that one) is less interested in the response we'd get and more in what we'd choose to share about the human race. Would we, for example, be honest about our own violent past? With stunning otherworldly imagery accompanying the deeply philosophical debate, *The Visit* pleases the eye as much as the brain. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 83 mins



LEE SCRATCH PERRY'S VISION OF PARADISE

★★★★☆ Out 5 February

IF PRONOUNCEMENTS ABOUT HIS previous life as a fish raise concerns that this docu-portrait of Lee Scratch Perry will uphold ganja-baked whimsy over insight, they soon pass. Shot over 13 years, Volker Schaner's hugely entertaining study of the spry dub legend digs deep and ranges wide. From Jamaica's Black Ark studios, we get rich juice on his Bob Marley work. Muso fans celebrate how he produced inexplicable sounds – one reckons he blew smoke on the tapes – while a visit to his mum is touchingly intimate. The real Perry gradually emerges, and his genius is all the more thrilling for it. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 97 mins



Dave wasn't allowed to look under the desk with the rest of them.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

THE INSIDER 1999
Research chemist Russell Crowe decides to appear on *60 Minutes* to blow the whistle on Big Tobacco.

ZODIAC 2007
Reporters hunt for the Zodiac killer and become ensnared by their own obsession.

PHILOMENA 2013
Crimes of the Catholic church (and the media) are uncovered in Stephen Frears' moving drama.

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Spotlight

★★★★☆ Out 29 January

And the Oscar goes to...?

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ADAM Sandler's *The Cobbler* comes the frontrunner for the Best Picture Oscar, an ode to old-fashioned journalism with nary a shred of sentiment or, one histrionic scene aside, sensationalism. Tom McCarthy's sobering drama demonstrates disciplined filmmaking built upon scrupulous storytelling, clear-eyed direction and unshowy performances, as befits a true-life tale about journalists who painstakingly piece together a Pulitzer Prize-winning story about systematic child abuse by Catholic priests in Boston.

July 2001. Father John Geoghan, now defrocked, is alleged to have molested more than 80 boys. *The Boston Globe* runs a couple of stories and moves on. Until, that is, incoming editor Marty Baron (Liev Schreiber) has the paper's investigative team, Spotlight – Walter 'Robby' Robinson (Michael Keaton), Michael Rezendes (Mark Ruffalo), Sacha Pfeiffer (Rachel McAdams) and Matt Carroll (Brian d'Arcy James) – dig deeper.

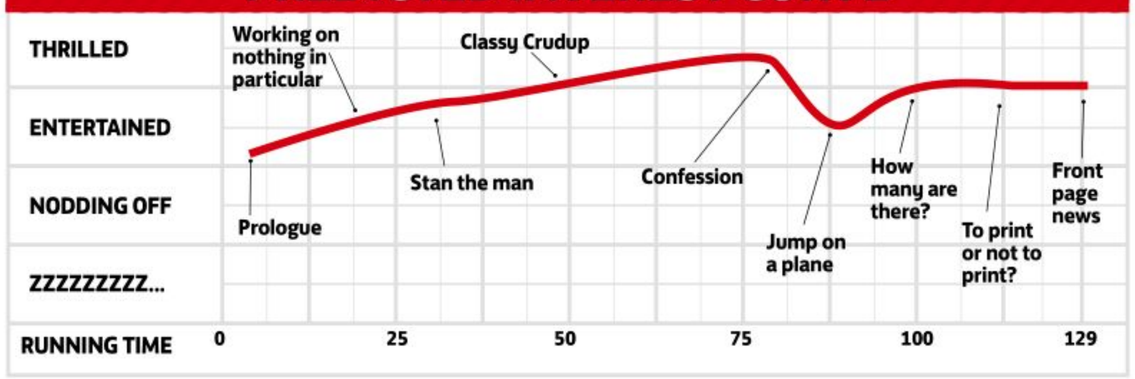
The next two hours are spent corralling and corroborating evidence, with paperwork sifted, doors cold-called and notes scribbled. Two attorneys come crucially into play – the dogged, dog-eared Mitchell Garabedian (Stanley Tucci), who represents the 86 plaintiffs in the Geoghan case, and the slick Eric Macleish (Billy Crudup), who has sought out-of-court renumeration for many victims. And the petitioning for the release of some smoking-gun documents becomes key.

> 'Spotlight resists cinematic clichés and trusts in its source material'

With exception of journalists running between desks to inject urgency, *Spotlight* resists cinematic clichés and instead trusts in the power of its source material. The case, like viewers' eyes, grows ever wider, taking in not just the Catholic Church but legal, political and journalistic institutions (including *The Globe* – this is not a film swollen with self-congratulation), and identifying a psychological dysfunction that spreads beyond Boston and, indeed, America. But it is McCarthy's understanding of this particular investigation in this particular city, with its Catholic populace and culture of shame and concealment, that makes *Spotlight* so engrossing. It took Baron, a Jew from Florida, to push for the ugly truth, and McCarthy, a graduate of Boston College who acted in 10 episodes of the similarly onion-layered *The Wire*, to make a responsible film of a powder-keg phenomenon.

Something to note: section editor Ben Bradlee Jr (John Slattery) is the son of Benjamin Crowninshield Bradlee, editor of *The Washington Post* while Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein documented the Watergate scandal. *Spotlight* isn't of the level of *All The President's Men*, but deserves mention in the same breath. **Jamie Graham**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



THE VERDICT A rigorously detailed telling of an important story that never loses sight of the human devastation. Terrific turns from the ensemble cast.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Tom McCarthy **Starring** Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton, Rachel McAdams, Liev Schreiber, Stanley Tucci **Screenplay** Josh Singer, Tom McCarthy **Distributor** eOne **Running time** 129 mins

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The Assassin

★★★★☆ Out 22 January

Murder she wrought.

DIRECTING FOR THE FIRST TIME since 2007's *Flight Of The Red Balloon*, Hou Hsiao-hsien returns with a martial arts epic like no other. Radiant, graceful, ambiguous and artful, this idiosyncratic take on the genre is far removed from, say, *House Of Flying Daggers*. And it's already a critics' darling, having hoovered up praise – and a Best Director gong – when it premiered at last year's Cannes Film Festival.

As well as Hou's first entry in the genre, it's also the highest-budgeted (at $15 million) film of a career that has been around intimate chamber pieces like the aforementioned *Flight*, starring Juliette Binoche, and *Three Times* (2005). By contrast, *The Assassin* is lavish and lush (kudos to Mark Lee Ping Bin's gorgeous cinematography), yet Hou never abandons his cinematic principles.

Set in 9th Century China, the story follows Nie Yinniang (Shu Qi), a trainee assassin being tutored by the so-called 'princess nun', Jiaxin (Sheu Fang-yi). Living in a world of political instability, Yinniang is sent by her mentor to murder ruler Lord Tian (Chang Chen), with whom Jiaxin has her own axe to grind. It's here where the plot becomes increasingly dense, though the wondrous presentation of the colourful court is such a distraction that the narrative tangles hardly matter.

With sparse dialogue and a static camera, *The Assassin* is punctuated by only flashes of violence. Killings are brief and brutal; the acrobatic wire work popularised by choreographer Yuen Woo-ping is absent here in favour of a more pared-down (and far more realistic) approach. That's not to say Hou ignores the fantasy elements that the genre can touch on; just don't expect them to swamp this slow-burner.

Shot in Academy ratio – yet another example of how the film disarms you – *The Assassin* isn't for those eager for the sequel to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Instead, it's aimed at those looking for something more contemplative than kick-ass. Patience is required, but is also amply rewarded. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT **Hou puts the art in martial arts with this ravishing but strangely authentic actioner. Some will baulk at the pacing and plotting, but this needs to be seen.**

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Hou Hsiao-hsien **Starring** Shu Qi, Chang Chen, Zhou Yun, Juan Ching-tian, Sheu Fang-yi **Screenplay** Hou Hsiao-hsien, Hsieh Hai-meng, Ah Cheng **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running time** 105 mins

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

HERO 2002, HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS 2004
Two more wuxia wonders, this time from director Zhang Yimou.

THREE TIMES 2005
Hou's love-story triptych, starring *The Assassin*'s Shu Qi and Chang Chen before they went badass.

THE GRANDMASTER 2013
Wong Kar-wai and star Tony Leung's artful telling of Bruce Lee teacher – and Wing Chun maestro – Ip Man.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews



JANIS: LITTLE GIRL BLUE

★★★★☆ Out 5 February

SEISMIC TALENT, SENSITIVE SOUL, dead by 27: Amy J. Berg's stirring, shattering Janis Joplin portrait shares more than a first-name title with Asif Kapadia's *Amy*. Like Kapadia with Winehouse, Berg digs deep into Joplin's past, presenting her as a wounded radical in repressive Texas. California offered freedom, an outlet for her awesome blues rasp – and temptation. As crackling live footage ('Ball And Chain' *kills*) celebrates her talent, revealing letters and rigorous interviews show how Joplin revelled in her stage persona yet struggled with life: a recipe for triumph then tragedy, here given its punchy and desperately poignant due. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 107 mins



KRAMPUS

★★★☆☆ Out now

IF YOU THOUGHT GREMLINS HAD A twisted take on Christmas, brace yourself for *Krampus*. Forged in the image of that Joe Dante classic, its assortment of festive fiends are the stuff of snowbound nightmares as young Max (Emjay Anthony) and his family battle the titular anti-Santa and his army of razor-toothed nasties. When finally unmasked, these mostly prosthetic critters are a grim delight. With its blizzards, creepy snowmen and gung-ho cast, there are moments where *Krampus* scrapes the underbelly of brilliance. A slow-burn mid-section and a try-hard climax limit its impact, meaning this isn't quite a festive classic, but it sleighs, ahem, *slays* most recent Christmas movies. **Josh Winning**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 98 mins


Never ask to read a man's diary.

Goosebumps

★★★★☆ Out 5 February From page to scream...

YEARS BEFORE THERE WERE queues outside bookshops for *Harry Potter*, kids were hiding under their duvets with *Goosebumps*, the hammy horror series by R.L. Stine that spawned more than 60 bestselling titles in the mid-'90s. It's an odd move to land a movie adap now, when a lot of mums and dads will have all but forgotten the books, but you don't need to know your Slappys from your Swamp Monsters to get the concept and love it. A box-fresh comedy horror that slings Amblin-esque heart, B-movie thrills and plenty of CGI at the screen, it's a lot of dumb fun.

Jack Black plays Stine (yes, it's a bit meta) as a curious mix of Igor and Truman Capote – a reclusive writer who spends his days popping out of attic windows and screaming at his teenage daughter (Odeya Rush) for getting cute with the new boy next door (Dylan Minnette). The kids accidentally open Stine's magic manuscripts, unleashing *every* monster he ever dreamed up. With werewolves, mummies, giant insects, blob monsters, zombies, evil clowns and mutant plants all running amok, this could be *Cabin In The Woods* for kids. Some scenes work better than others (including a film-stealing mob of stop-motion gnomes that squeeze in a few *Gremlins* nods), but there's never a dull moment as Black dives into the frantic monster mash with more mad gusto than we've seen in some time.

It's far from slick, most of the other grown-ups get sidelined and the quality of special effects is obviously pitched at kids too young to care. But there's a goofy, old-fashioned vibe throughout that makes it feel exactly like the kind of film you wanted to see when you were eight. **Paul Bradshaw**

THE VERDICT **Jack Black is the ringmaster in a three-ring circus of family horror that stays faithful to everything that made R.L. Stine's junior pulp fiction such a '90s playground sensation.**

› **Certificate** PG **Director** Rob Letterman **Starring** Jack Black, Odeya Rush, Dylan Minnette, Amy Ryan, Ryan Lee **Screenplay** Darren Lemke **Distributor** Sony **Running time** 103 mins

Daddy's Home

★★☆☆☆ Out now Below pa.

WILL FERRELL'S FIRST LIVE-ACTION family-friendly comedy since 2009's *Land Of The Lost* falls between two stools: arguably too saucy for kids, definitely too lame for adults. Ferrell plays Brad, a big softy who is stepdad to his wife Sarah's (Linda Cardellini) two kids. But when biological pop Dusty (Mark Wahlberg) arrives on the scene, fully intending to win his ex back, Brad's manhood is more than challenged.

As set-ups go, there is potential. Wahlberg is the cool father on the motorbike who can handle a toolbox and a skateboard – "like Jesse James and Mick Jagger had a baby," as Sarah puts it. Ferrell is all about caring, sharing and conflict resolution (he even works at a smooth-jazz radio station, run by Thomas Haden Church's goateed goof). Needless to say, the kids are delighted to see their "real dad" back on the beat – and before you know it, he's staying in the family home.

There's the added complication that, due to an unfortunate dental accident, Brad can't get Sarah pregnant. This leads to one of the more amusing sequences, a visit to a fertility doc (Bobby Cannavale) arranged by Dusty, but such moments of inspiration are rare. Instead, we get a proliferation of poorly executed slapstick stunts – Brad crashing Dusty's bike; Brad hitting power cables after a skateboarding accident – that fail to amuse.

Wahlberg's role largely amounts to getting his pecs out or showing off his physical prowess (true, his one-handed chin-ups are impressive), while Ferrell, though more teary-eyed than usual, still gives a 100-decibel performance. Sadly, the best you can say is that it's no worse than director/co-writer Sean Anders' other comic misfires, *Sex Drive*, *That's My Boy* and *Horrible Bosses 2*. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT **Mildly amusing at best, this is largely a moribund comedy that struggles for big laughs. If you only see one Ferrell/Wahlberg team-up, make it *The Other Guys*.**

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Sean Anders **Starring** Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg, Linda Cardellini, Thomas Haden Church **Screenplay** Sean Anders, Brian Burns, John Morris **Distributor** Paramount **Running time** 96 mins


The Funky Bunch: the next generation.



Trumbo

★★★☆☆ Out 5 February

Writers blocked...

WITH FOUR EMMYS AND A TONY already, Bryan Cranston is making a strong run at the EGOT Club with his first leading screen role since *Breaking Bad*. His affable and commanding performance as persecuted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo puts a spring in the step of what's otherwise a somewhat plodding biopic, its workmanlike production an uncomfortable fit for its stranger-than-fiction true story.

We pick up in 1947, with the well-liked and wildly successful Trumbo (best known now as the writer of *Spartacus*) teetering on the brink of a fall from grace. He, along with nine others, finds himself blacklisted for refusing to cooperate with Congress' anti-communist witch hunt and, after a spell in federal prison, finds himself virtually unemployable. Once he was one of the highest-paid writers in Hollywood; now he's forced to churn out paltry B-movie scripts under a pseudonym.

If director Jay Roach's approach to McCarthy-era Hollywood feels somewhat stilted – he leans heavily on recreated newsreel footage and expositional soundbites – his lightness of touch also lends a wry sense of mischief. As Trumbo sneaks back into legit screenplay work with a little help from Kirk Douglas (Dean O'Gorman, AKA *The Hobbit*'s Fili), the film moves from its simplistic early tone into essentially a caper story with typewriters, and works all the better for it.

For all the gusto and verve of Cranston's performance, he can't imbue Trumbo with the nuance he lacks, and a belated attempt to give him some emotional conflict feels unearned. The supporting roles are even more like archetypes – though Helen Mirren is thrillingly caustic as tyrannical gossip columnist Hedda Hopper – and there's a sense that the performances are all that's holding *Trumbo* together. Screenwriters being notoriously under-appreciated in Hollywood, it's a pleasure to see the scribe as hero here, but by the same token it's unfortunate that the film's own script feels so perfunctory. **Emma Dibdin**

THE VERDICT A sturdy and solidly unremarkable portrait of a fascinating period in Hollywood history, *Trumbo* is glossy, old-fashioned fun anchored by a magnetic, theatrical turn from Cranston.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Jay Roach **Starring** Bryan Cranston, Diane Lane, Helen Mirren, Louis C.K., Elle Fanning **Screenplay** John McNamara **Distributor** eOne **Running time** 124 mins



LOST IN KARASTAN

★★☆☆☆ Out 22 January

A LACK OF DIRECTION IS PRECISELY what flummoxes director Ben Hopkins' mix of culture-clashing black comedy, romcom and meta-movie. Co-writing with Pawel Pawlikowski (*Ida*), Hopkins gets droll work from a cast led by Matthew Macfadyen as Emil, a blocked filmmaker attending a no-budget Eastern Europe film festival. MyAnna Buring is amusingly withering as an enigmatic PR, and Noah Taylor's wild-eyed actor galvanises proceedings, but laughs surrender to soul-searching and unearned darker spins. Too daft for drama and too solemn for satire. Merely lost. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 96 mins



THE 33

★★★☆☆ Out 29 January

IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME before a movie was made about Chile's 2010 mining disaster, and here it is – a real-life tale that owes as much to formula as fact. Antonio Banderas leads the cast as 'Super' Mario Sepúlveda, keeping up the spirits of his 32 fellow miners trapped underground. Director Patricia Riggen charts the cave-in and ensuing rescue efforts to stirring if conventional effect, abetted by one of the late James Horner's final scores. The biggest problem is the distracting lack of non-Chilean casting, with even Gabriel Byrne asked to approximate a South American accent. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 127 mins



INNOCENCE OF MEMORIES

★★★★☆ Out 29 January

IN 2012, TURKEY'S ORHAN PAMUK folded fact into fiction when he opened a museum of objects documenting a tale of obsessive love from his novel *The Museum Of Innocence*. Pop-promo director and docu-maker Grant Gee's reflection on book and museum sustains Pamuk's between-states thinking, creating a literary travelogue that drifts into hypnotic territory. Lines blur between love/obsession, memory/delusion, time/space. The result veers closer to arty film noir than reportage: a stylised love letter to the city, memory and objects, charged with fading but potent feeling. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 90 mins



RAMS

★★★☆☆ Out 5 February

THE RAMS IN QUESTION BELONG TO elderly Icelandic sheep farmers Gummi (Sigurður Sigurjónsson) and Kiddi (Theodór Júlíusson) who, despite being neighbours in a remote valley, have not spoken to one another in 40 years. But when their flocks are threatened by disease, the estranged siblings must co-operate in defying the authorities. Deadpan Scandi-humour runs through writer/director Grímur Hákonarson's carefully crafted tale, and there's no doubting the film's empathy for its protagonists. Shame, then, that the final-reel shift into tragedy feels misplaced. **Tom Dawson**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 93 mins



Youth

★★★★☆ Out 29 January

Spa trek.

PAOLO SORRENTINO'S FIRST English-language movie, *This Must Be The Place* (Sean Penn as an ageing Goth-rocker pursuing the Nazi who maltreated his dad), was a bit of a bust. So it's good to see that with *Youth* he's regained the form of his best Italian work (*The Consequences Of Love*, *The Great Beauty*, etc). We're in a plush Alpine spa resort where two old friends, retired Brit composer/conductor Fred (Michael Caine) and US movie director Mick (Harvey Keitel) have met up each year to enjoy the treatments, reminisce over their past lives and observe the to-ings and fro-ings of their fellow guests.

Who are a highly colourful bunch. For starters, there's an actor (Paul Dano) miffed that all he's remembered for is playing a robot. Then there's Mick's bickering five-person screenwriting team; an Indian guru doggedly trying to levitate; a hugely fat Latin American with a vast tattoo of Karl Marx on his back; a starchy middle-aged couple who sit at table day after day without exchanging a single word... and in a ripely satirical cameo, Jane Fonda as an acid-tongued, garishly made-up Hollywood diva who contemptuously rejects the lead role in Mick's final film. A royal emissary (Alex Macqueen) shows up intermittently, trying to persuade Fred to perform for Her Maj. And there's Rachel Weisz as Fred's daughter, who's married to Mick's son but caught in a love triangle with pop star Paloma Faith (playing herself).

All sounds a bit inconsequential? Indeed it is – and that's its charm. Caine and Keitel make an unexpectedly relishable double act, Caine's laconic wit playing off Keitel's wiry urgency. Underlying it all is a quiet meditation on growing old, on memory, faded love and regret for lost ideals. But darker implications are offset by the limpid beauty of Luca Bigazzi's photography and Sorrentino's clear delight in the infinite vagaries of lived emotions. **Philip Kemp**

THE VERDICT **The offbeat teaming of Caine and Keitel anchors this wryly humorous Alpine-set fantasia, rich in beguiling images and suffused with a quiet, sensual melancholy.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Paolo Sorrentino **Starring** Michael Caine, Harvey Keitel, Rachel Weisz, Paul Dano, Jane Fonda **Screenplay** Paolo Sorrentino **Distributor** Pathé **Running time** 118 mins



THE LAST DIAMOND

★★★☆☆ Out 22 January

FRESHLY RELEASED FROM PRISON, con man Simon (Yvan Attal) agrees to help steal the fabled Florentine diamond. His plan involves befriending and then betraying diamond expert Julia (*The Artist*'s Bérénice Bejo), who hires him as security advisor for the jewel's auction following the mysterious death of her mother. What starts as a familiar, frivolous caper (complete with jazzy score) strays into noir territory as twists complicate the plot to the point of confusion. Luckily, director/co-writer Eric Barbier never forgets the vital ingredient – fun – even if the character interplay doesn't always sparkle like the titular gem. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 108 mins



BREAKDOWN

★★☆☆☆ Out 15 January

EX-EASTENDERS 'ARD MAN CRAIG Fairbrass is Alfie Jennings, gangland's top hitman and torturer, who finds himself on the wrong side of The Firm when he starts having embarrassing flashbacks in a kebab shop. Country-gent kingpin Albert (*Game Of Thrones*' James Cosmo) doesn't want a triggerman with a fickle finger, so he orders his gang of thumb-headed goons to try and take him and his whole family out. The debut feature of British director Jonnie Malachi, it's a sadistic, shallow little revenger whose only saving grace is a handful of half-decent performances. **Paul Bradshaw**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 110 mins



PARTISAN

★★★☆☆ Out now

THE TITLE SUGGESTS A WW2 MOVIE, but Australian writer/director Ariel Kleiman's debut is an enigmatic drama about a secretive Eastern European cult. Leading this tribe of single mothers and children is the messiah-like Gregori (Vincent Cassel), who trains his young charges to become assassins; yet his 11-year-old surrogate son Alexander (Jeremy Chabriel) is beginning to question his supreme power. Kleiman seems less interested in explaining the 'whys' of his scenario than in observing his characters and their interactions – a strategy that pays off thanks to excellent lead turns. **Tom Dawson**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 94 mins



ONE AND TWO

★★★☆☆ Out 29 January

QUIETLY COMPELLING AND BEAUTIFULLY lensed, this intimate tale of sibling love in spite of an abusive father looks and feels like a 19th-century tragic melodrama, with one major difference: the brother and sister pair have the ability to teleport. Their vanishing act is a simple-but-impressive special effect in an otherwise relatively low-budget production filled with angst-ridden vulnerability from stars Timothée Chalamet and Kiernan Shipka (*Mad Men*'s now-teen Sally Draper). But the sci-fi element confounds rather than enhances; we're left with a sense of anticlimax fuelled by loose ends and unexplored potential. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 90 mins

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Dirty Grandpa

★★☆☆☆ Out 29 January The beer hunter...

WHILE ROBERT DE NIRO HAS done plenty of comedy in recent years, most of it's been relatively clean-cut. *Dirty Grandpa*, a title that needs little explanation, sees him lusting after college girls, engaging in racial and homophobic 'banter', and generally behaving badly. Is it what you want to see from the *Taxi Driver* star? Not really. But fans of De Niro have long become resigned to his shallow output in the two decades post-*Heat*.

Directed by Dan Mazer (*I Give It A Year*), *Dirty Grandpa* is a coming-of-age frat film in which neither protagonist is at college. De Niro's septuagenarian Dick Kelly has just lost his wife of 40 years and wants his grandson, Jason (Zac Efron), a preppy lawyer about to get married to Julianne Hough's one-note fiancée, to drive him from Atlanta to Florida. It's soon clear he's not grief-stricken but desperate to screw "until my dick falls off".

Soon enough, they're in Daytona Beach during spring break; while Jason moons over former classmate Shadia (Zoey Deutch), Grandpa Dick, masquerading as a professor, sets his sights on student Lenore (Aubrey Plaza). Before you know it, ol' Dick's luring the reluctant Jason into a crack-smoking orgy of hedonism...

With a script fixated on the male member, you could be forgiven for thinking this was written by a 13-year-old. Except your average teen probably wouldn't include a wretched, sentimental subplot about Dick wanting to make up for being a lousy father and Jason realising he needs to follow his heart (yawn). Result? Beneath all the Cheech and Chong-esque anarchy and Seth Rogen-style knob gags lies a sappy romcom. Talk about playing dirty. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT Another formulaic Hollywood crude-fest trying way too hard to offend. De Niro and Efron are fine and Plaza has a ball, but big laughs are few and far between.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Dan Mazer **Starring** Robert De Niro, Zac Efron, Aubrey Plaza, Julianne Hough, Zoey Deutch **Screenplay** John Phillips **Distributor** Lionsgate **Running time** 102 mins



Neither of them had trunks on underneath.



Lex Luthor's election campaign wasn't going so well.

Our Brand Is Crisis

★★☆☆☆ Out 22 January Campaign flail...

IN SANDRA BULLOCK'S LAST cinematic brush with politics, she was dolled up as a pageant queen and championing world peace. *Our Brand Is Crisis* sees her taking a more hardline approach as a neurotic campaigner attempting to boost the popularity of a presidential candidate, but it's hard not to yearn for the comparatively sharp satire of *Miss Congeniality* (for more, see p143).

The ninth film produced by George Clooney and Grant Heslov's Smokehouse Pictures – which has a pretty even split between the sublime (*Argo*, *The Ides Of March*) and the ridiculous (*The Men Who Stare At Goats*) – *OBIC* is actually more in the vein of director David Gordon Green's quirkier comedies. Echoes of *Pineapple Express* abound as 'Calamity' Jane Bodine (Bullock) is hired by Bolivian presidential hopeful Pedro Castillo (Joaquim de Almeida, oily and excellent) as his campaign leader.

Spending much of her initial stay dragging around an oxygen tank (thanks to an onset of altitude sickness) before finally going toe-to-toe with Castillo, Bullock excels at the comedy, but she's better than the material, particularly when the final act calls on her to find pathos amid the preposterousness.

In light of savvier political efforts like *Veep* and *House Of Cards*, *OBIC* feels critically lacking in wit and insight. It's a decent role for Bullock, but you get little sense that it's based on actual events (depicted in the same-named 2005 doc this film fictionalises). Most frustrating of all is that it raises an intriguing question – should Bolivia get the president it wants, or the one it needs? – only to give more precedence to Bullock's pratfalls. Which were better in *Miss Congeniality*... **Josh Winning**

THE VERDICT Bullock's on form in a film that takes a playful poke at political campaigning but stops short of anything genuinely insightful.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** David Gordon Green **Starring** Sandra Bullock, Billy Bob Thornton, Anthony Mackie, Joaquim de Almeida, Ann Dowd **Screenplay** Peter Straughan **Distributor** Warner Bros **Running time** 107 mins

Box office charts 30.11.15 – 20.12.15



STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

At long last, the ghost of Jar Jar Binks can be laid to rest. Just to be sure, if the worst comes to the worst, Lucasfilm is keeping Max Von Sydow on board to perform an exorcism.



CHRISTMAS WITH THE COOPERS

In the US this festive fam-com is called *Love The Coopers*; the UK title sounds a lot less cloying, though we would still have preferred 'Not Quite As Awful As *The Family Stone*'.



IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

They delayed the release because of the film's "winter" feel; everyone getting on each other's tits, yes; but blokes eating and drinking bugger all hardly screams Christmas, does it?

UK TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Star Wars: The Force Awakens ★★★★★	£33.9m	£33.9m	1
2	The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2 ★★★★	£7.4m	£26.7m	5
3	The Good Dinosaur ★★★★	£5.2m	£8.1m	4
4	SPECTRE ★★★★	£4.4m	£92.8m	8
5	Bridge Of Spies ★★★★★	£4.4m	£6.1m	4
6	The Lady In The Van ★★★★	£2.7m	£11.7m	6
7	Christmas With The Coopers ★★★	£2m	£2m	3
8	Black Mass ★★★★	£1.9m	£3.2m	4
9	Carol ★★★★★	£1.5m	£2m	4
10	Sisters ★★★	£1.2m	£1.2m	1

US TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Star Wars: The Force Awakens ★★★★★	$248m	$248m	1
2	The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2 ★★★★	$56.1m	$254.4m	5
3	Creed ★★★★	$45.3m	$87.9m	4
4	The Good Dinosaur ★★★★	$40.9m	$96.5m	4
5	Krampus ★★★	$34.8m	$34.8m	3
6	In The Heart Of The Sea ★★★	$18.6m	$18.6m	2
7	SPECTRE ★★★★	$17.8m	$193.9m	7
8	The Night Before ★★★★	$17.4m	$41.5m	5
9	Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip N/A	$14.4m	$14.4m	1
10	Sisters ★★★	$13.4m	$13.4m	1



BLACK MASS

As the awards race heats up, those in the know are saying this could well be Depp's year; after missing out for *The Lone Ranger*, he *must* have the Razzie in the bag for *Mortdecai*.



SISTERS

Maybe Poehler/Fey didn't steal too much (or any) of *Star Wars*' thunder, but we'll always have their 'Farce Awakens' parody: "A real house... A real pool... Practical vomit effects."



KRAMPUS

With this and *Trick 'R Treat*, Michael Dougherty has become the Garry Marshall of holiday-themed horror. Although let's see him make a film as blood-curdling as *New Year's Eve*.

Still out, still good...

Our pick of the movies out now



THE REVENANT ★★★★★
"A remarkably visceral, astounding film. With a director, DoP and cast at the top of their game, *The Revenant* is a filmmaking triumph, full of ambition, beauty and savagery. You cannot afford to miss Alejandro G. Iñárritu's extraordinary wilderness drama on the big screen."



CREED ★★★★
"Ryan Coogler and Michael B. Jordan re-ignite their *Fruitvale Station* chemistry while Sylvester Stallone delivers a knockout performance. Punchy and powerful, this *Rocky* rocks – it's a movie hardcore fans of the series will love."



THE GOOD DINOSAUR ★★★★
"Simple but effective, Pixar's latest doesn't reinvent the wheel, but it's still damn fine entertainment. Coming into its own when its two heroes buddy up, it will have you feigning grit in your eye. And the scenery is beautiful."



THE NIGHT BEFORE ★★★★
"If buddy movies are your thing but Christmas movies aren't, you'll enjoy this refreshingly edgy romp about three friends (Rogen, Gordon-Levitt, Mackie) lost in the city full of regrets. Funny, cynical and warm in all the right ways."

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Coming soon...

The big hitters on the cards for next issue...

POINT BREAK 12 FEBRUARY

Surf's up – as well as snowboarding, motorbiking, and wingsuit flying. Can this remake be as big as Bigelow's? More importantly, will Gary Busey do a *Big Brother*-style "HONK!" over the end credits? For more, albeit not including any human geese, see p82.



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES 12 FEBRUARY

This one's been a long time coming (producer Natalie Portman was once attached to star), but the living dead aren't renowned for their haste. The well-spoken, viscera-covered cast is headed by Lily James, who spills her guts (not like that) on p78.



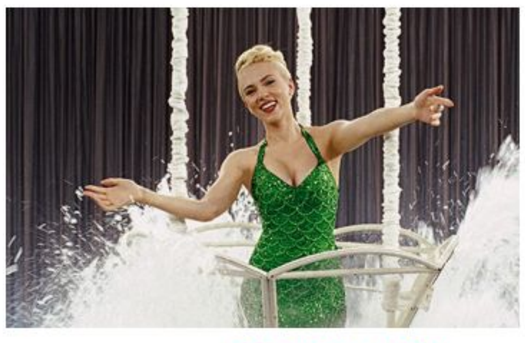
ZOOLANDER 2 12 FEBRUARY

Film's most famous Derek (not counting Bo, Jacobi or Malcolm) is back, older and dimmer than before. Expect an *Anchorman*-load of cameos, including Justin Bieber as one of the celebs whose Blue Steel-related deaths spark a murder mystery (and a few eugoogoolies).



THE FINEST HOURS 19 FEBRUARY

On the heels of *San Andreas* comes a disaster epic with possibly a pinch more realism: the true-life tale of a '50s Cape Cod rescue mission. Lead Chris Pine promises "a classic Disney film"; Mickey Mouse and a load of walking brooms carrying buckets of water?



HAIL, CAESAR! 26 FEBRUARY

This is shaping up to be a classic Coen combo of old Hollywood (*Barton Fink*) and Clooney-centric silliness (*Burn After Reading*). Centred on a studio 'fixer' (Josh Brolin), it's got major wattage: Johansson, Tatum, Fiennes, Swinton... And Dolph Lundgren!

THE ACTION ISSUE

HOLDING OUT FOR AN ANTIHERO

Could Ryan Reynolds' decade-in-the-making passion project be the anti-superhero flick to cure comic-book fatigue? Total Film steps through the fourth wall to go on set and find out what makes **Deadpool** tick... WORDS MATT MAYTUM

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WHAM!

No, we haven't just taken a beating inside a comic-book panel. That four-letter word is the top-secret working title for *Deadpool*, letting us know we've come to the right place. It's a rainy morning in Vancouver, April 2015, and *Total Film* is in the southern suburb of Surrey to visit the set of the first solo outing for Deadpool, Marvel Comics' most raucous, rude and rule-busting creation, known for his fourth-wall breaking soliloquising, despicable sense of humour and questionable morals. Also known by his alter ego Wade Wilson, he's nicknamed the 'Merc with a Mouth' for his tendency to spout off. Think of him as Professor XXX-rated and you'll start to get the measure of the man.

We're strolling around the Amix Recycling depot, home of the production's biggest set. The impressively disheveled junkyard debris that's made the location something of a maze took three months to create (one month to source, two months to assemble). Crushed cars, train carriages, a bit of a boat... it's tightly organised chaos. Industrial machinery hums in the background. Off in the distance, the tops of skyscrapers are obscured behind thick cloud. Dotted around the depot are stunt performers slamming each other into mats and being dragged across the floor, rehearsing moves that will be filmed later that day. It's the beginning of a 12-hour filming day, and it's just past the halfway mark in the tight 48-day shoot.

Taking shelter from the weather under a military-style tent, screenwriters Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick (who paired on *Zombieland*) are on hand to give some background on the film, having been attached for more than five years, seeing their script leak (to fan acclaim) during that time. "I think the way we looked at it was starting fresh," says Wernick, "imagining Deadpool hadn't existed in *Wolverine* and creating an actual origin story – how he became Deadpool – and then tracking him through the present. We do poke fun at *Wolverine*, at how he was portrayed. Deadpool – because he can break the fourth wall – can have fun with how he was portrayed in *Wolverine*..." Yes, Ryan Reynolds' first outing as Wade Wilson was in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* (he's part of 20th Century Fox's Marvel universe, with *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*, as opposed to Disney's MCU). His costumeless Wade Wilson won over some with his wisecracking, but the hardcore Deadpool fans (of which there are legion) were extremely unhappy with how that representation panned out, with the notoriously chatty character having his mouth sewn shut, and bearing none of the characteristics of his comic-book form.

'I'VE ALWAYS LOVED DEADPOOL'S CAUSTIC WIT – HIS HUMOUR'S A TERRIBLE COPING MECHANISM FOR OTHER THINGS' RYAN REYNOLDS

While Reese and Wernick aren't adapting directly from any particular comics arc ("we've used one scene directly from the comics," explains Reese), the plan is clearly to be as

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Antiheroes assemble: Wade Wilson in happier times with girlfriend Vanessa (Morena Baccarin) and (left) Negasonic Teenage Warhead (Brianna Hildebrand) with Deadpool (Ryan Reynolds) and Colossus (Andre Tricoteux).

faithful to the character as possible. "The comics have a whole bunch of writers and we're basically the latest in that series of writers," Reese adds.

The duo form half of the creative team that have kept *Deadpool*'s vital signs ticking over through years of red lights and development hell. First-time director, and co-founder of VFX studio Blur, Tim Miller is another quarter, and Ryan Reynolds completes the pack. It's been a true labour of love for the 39-year-old Canadian. Calling it "a rollercoaster... like a bad relationship", Reynolds was clinging on even when it looked liked Fox was never going to give the thumbs up. Producing as well as starring, Reynolds contributed to the script while it was being written.

"When we wrote it," explains Reese, "we'd send Ryan pages and he'd give us his thoughts and then we'd go on to the next 20 [*pages*] and we did it five or six times, and that was really fun... [*On set*] Ryan's a great ad-libber and improvises a lot of great lines." Wernick chimes in with a grin. "It's a little bit depressing that Ryan Reynolds is better looking than us, funnier than us, smarter than us, richer than us, and now sometimes funnier and a better writer than us. That sucks every once in a while!"

"I think they're being generous when they say that," Reynolds tells us later during a break in shooting. "I've had his voice in my head in a way that's hard to explain for a long time, I can definitely contribute to it, but I wouldn't say I'm sitting there with those guys at two in the morning hammering out action sequences on a page." Taking a brief break during the day's set-ups, Reynolds is in his full Deadpool gear (sans mask). Bearing a few days' stubble and a close-cropped military-style haircut, he stands at an imposing 6'2". Relaxed and with an easy charm, he's certainly not showing any visible signs of strain at finally making a film he's been invested in for so long. "You know, I feel a little bit of that pressure," he admits. "I think we all do. But we've had this script ready for five years. What we're shooting is what we want." (Fox signed off on an R-rated script; at one point a PG-13 script was being prepared for a backup.)

There's no doubting that this has been a long time coming for Reynolds. "It's been brought to me actually in a number of iterations over the years. The first time, 11 years ago, it was at New Line Cinema, I believe. They had the licensing rights through Avi Arad, who at the time owned Marvel. Avi was thinking about optioning this particular character to New Line, and New Line was thinking about doing it with me and David Goyer." He details the further coming togethers and falling aparts of different versions of a Deadpool movie which have followed (including a mooted appearance in an X-Force ensemble). It wasn't actually greenlit until the notoriously leaked, CGI-animated >>



WORKING GIRL

Morena Baccarin boosts her geek cred with Deadpool.

Can you tell us a bit about your character, Vanessa Carlysle?
She's Wade Wilson's girlfriend, basically. She's a prostitute when they meet. They meet at a bar and immediately have this amazing rapport, and fall in love really by giving each other a lot of shit [*laughs*]. And it's really, really fun to watch and to play. She can keep up with him and give it back to him, which is, I think, what he's attracted to.

How was it working with Ryan Reynolds?
He's awesome. He has a tremendously difficult job to do, with all of the prosthetics and the suit. This is a project that has been his passion for over five years. He's been trying to get this movie made. It was really amazing to see how hard he worked, tirelessly, and constantly in a good mood. There was a lot [*of improv*]. We would do a scene the way it was scripted, and inevitably we would always try different things. It was really fun.

Does Vanessa (AKA Copycat) get to do any shape-shifting in the film?
This is more of an origin story for Deadpool. I don't know [*if she'll return for a future film*], actually. I have no idea. They left it open, so I guess they're waiting to see what their next move is.

You've appeared in *Gotham*, a DC property, and now Marvel's *Deadpool*. Are you becoming a bit of a comics expert?
I've become very familiar with the DC and Marvel worlds. It's actually making me want to go back and read them. I've been very lucky to not be tagged to one comics universe, but all of them. It's been really fun.

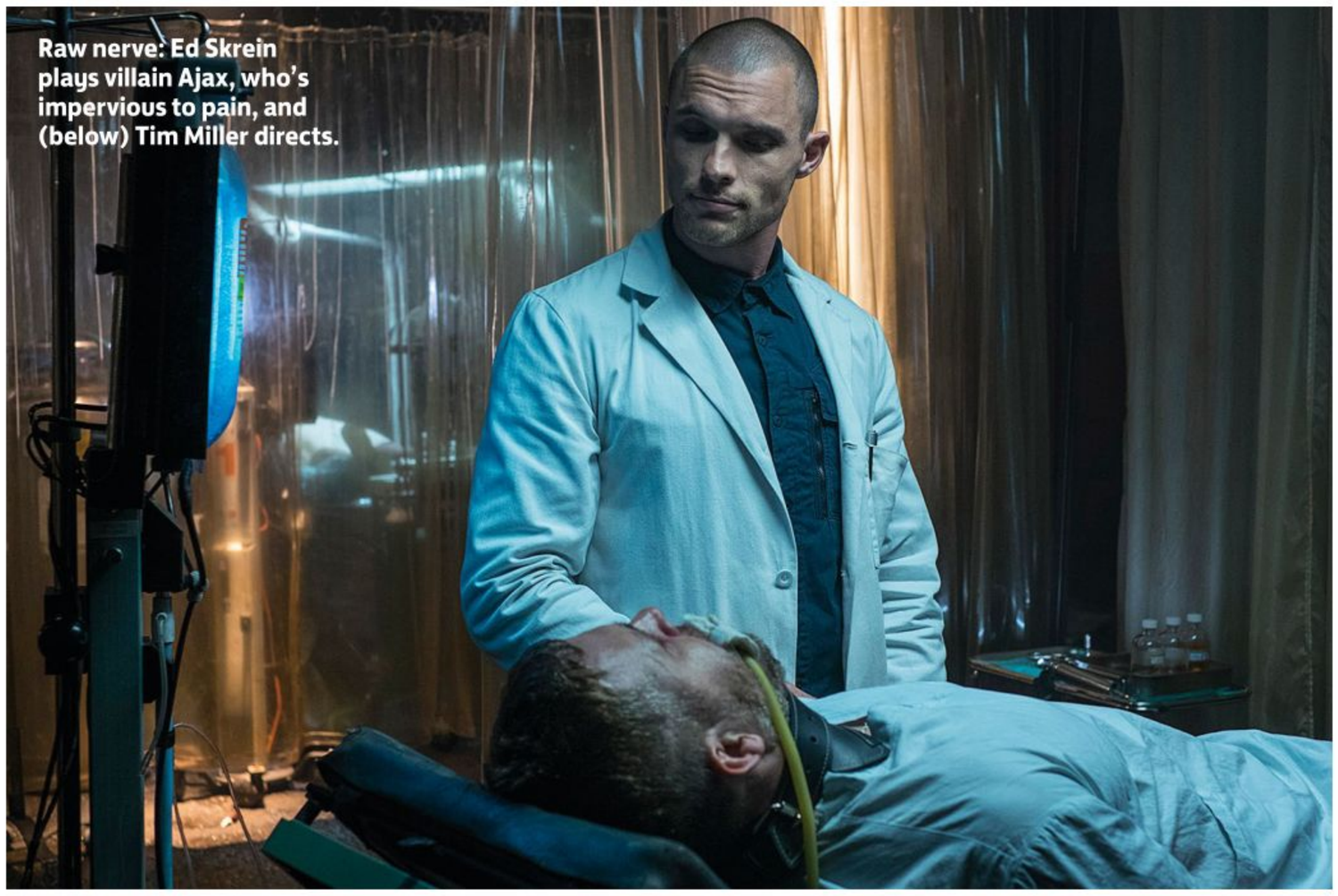
You must still get a lot of fans asking you if *Firefly* is ever going to return...
All the time. [*laughs*] People are always asking me if there's going to be more *Firefly* – I feel bad; I wish I could tell them yes! I just saw Joss Whedon at the Comic-Con [*last*] summer, and we see each other now and then.

Do you still want to be a Bond girl?
Yeah, that's something I need to get off the bucket list. Who wouldn't want to be a Bond girl? I mean, there are a lot of things I would like to do. A Shakespeare movie. I would like to do more plays. I would like to do some period pieces. There are quite a few directors I'd love to work with: Iñárritu; there are so many amazing Brazilian filmmakers right now that I would love to work with. Soderbergh... There's a lot out here. **MM**

footage broke the internet, with a rapturous fan response reflected in millions of YouTube views. Showcasing Deadpool at his witty best – taking as much pleasure from mocking the bad guys as he does from killing them, and doing it all with an OTT flair – it was enough to get the project twitching again. "It forced Fox to take a look at it quite seriously," confirms Reynolds. "People really wanted to see that character."

That character has been rabidly embraced by comic-book fans since his relatively recent inception in 1991, first appearing in X-spin-off *The New Mutants* before gaining solo popularity. Snarky, unpredictable and with healing powers to rival Wolverine's, he's known for breaking the fourth wall and acknowledging the fact that he exists within the panels of a comic book. In short, he's an antidote to the superheroes who take themselves too seriously. Sounds like he could be just the ticket in a movie marketplace stuffed with protagonists that tend towards the sombre side.

Tim Miller rocks up to join Reynolds, and to elaborate on the appeal of such a radical antihero. "In comics, aside from Spider-Man quipping, there's not a whole lot of comedy, and Deadpool was just fucking out there," he says. Some of the writers they had on it were just brilliant comedic writers." With 30 years' worth of comics lining the shelves of his studio, Miller grew up preparing for this gig, even it he doesn't seem like the most obvious choice on paper, given his limited experience outside the VFX realm. "When all the good directors dropped out..." is his jokey response when asked about the point he became involved in the long-gestating project. He's actually been attached since 2010, landing the job after being called into Fox to consult on the action scenes of another big project. (His response when offered *Deadpool*? "Fuck yeah!")



Raw nerve: Ed Skrein plays villain Ajax, who's impervious to pain, and (below) Tim Miller directs.



"Look at my suit, it's all fucked up," Reynolds offers, extending a forearm for us to touch. It has a rough, almost scaly finish that feels very different to a lot of the spotless spandex you see on screen. "It's dirty, he doesn't wash it," interjects Miller. "I think it has to be different. I think it's interesting because it's different. If you're just making another movie with shiny superheroes, it gets a little fucking tired after a while. I think this makes it interesting for everybody. People are ready, don't you think?"

Anyone unfamiliar with the red-and-black-suited mercenary should get a thorough introduction here. The time-hopping narrative will chronicle Wade Wilson's transformation to Deadpool, but it won't tell the story in a simple A-to-B fashion. The scene that's filming today is the start of the film's final showdown, but it'll come at the halfway point of the film. In the beginning, chronologically speaking, Wade falls into a relationship with Vanessa Carlysle (Morena Baccarin), who is a prostitute when they meet. "They have this immensely passionate relationship that of course turns very complicated when he gets diagnosed with cancer," explains Baccarin, whose character is a shape-shifting mutant in the comics, although those powers are unlikely to be displayed in this film.

Desperately seeking a cure, Wade heads to a clinic in Guadalajara, Mexico, leading him to become part of the rudimentary Weapon X program – the hush-hush facility that coated Wolverine's skeleton in adamantium. The experimental process he undergoes leaves him hideously scarred (see page 67 for details on Reynolds' make-up process), but he does at least have regenerative healing powers, and his sense of humour's intact. "I've always loved his caustic wit," says Reynolds. "I love the idea of humour as a terrible coping mechanism for other things." Post-transformation, Wilson/Deadpool's primary motivation is revenge. It's what will give shape to what could have been a formless, self-referential series of skits, and it's also something that should give such a morally-dubious protagonist a share of our sympathies. "I think one way to make you root for an antihero is to put him up against someone who's even worse, so in this case we have Ajax, who's really, *really* evil," explains Reese. "So by contrast, Deadpool's not too bad; he'll kill people, but only if they really deserve it."

Played by rising Brit star Ed Skrein, Ajax is the big bad of the piece. It was a tough role to >>

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‘I’M CLOSER TO THIS CHARACTER THAN ANY OTHER CHARACTER I’VE PLAYED... I DON’T KNOW HOW PROUD I AM OF THAT’ RYAN REYNOLDS



No angel: MMA star Gina Carano is Ajax's minion Angel Dust and (bottom right) Wade has a moment with girlfriend Vanessa.

cast, says Miller, who needed someone who wasn't too well known, could handle their own stunts and was the right sort of age to go toe-to-toe convincingly with Reynolds. The director also wasn't keen on having a moustache-twirling villain. "It's really amazing when he gets into character," says Miller. "As the British say, he's a total cunt."

"The hardest thing about playing a villain is trying not to play the villain," concurs Reynolds. "A villain is really just someone with an opposing conviction, not necessarily a guy who's brought to this Earth to do evil. He really brought some humanity to Ajax, and really created a character that you just want Deadpool to kill so badly."

Skrein isn't filming on the day we're on set, but he pops over in his civvies for a chat. "This is my [*own*] outfit, I just dress like a villain in my normal life," he quips of his black leather jacket and baggy tracksuit trousers. Skrein cites *Blade Runner*'s Roy Batty and real-life serial killer Harold Shipman as inspirations for the role; having had his nerve-endings removed, super-strong Ajax can't feel anything. "This is an interesting notion to play with," says Skrein. "Any sort of violent conflict we'd ever get into, part of our concern would be, y'know, being hurt. He physically can't feel anything."

Getting involved in the fight scenes and stunts as far as the insurance bods would allow, Skrein likens the clash between Ajax and Deadpool to Joe Frazier versus Muhammad Ali: "You have Muhammad Ali as the Deadpool character, he's dancing and he's talking trash in your ear, trying to get you to lose your form, and Frazier is just a straight through juggernaut." He drives a fist into the palm of his hand. "It's a heavyweight style." Doing an hour-and-a-half of fitness training every morning, plus two hours on top of that with the stunt team, he's in peak shape for the role. "This guy transformed his body and his mind, and just became a killing machine for this movie," beams Reynolds. "When you see him standing next to Deadpool, you just think, 'Oh, that would be a really good fight.'"

Although one ferocious foe isn't all Deadpool has to contend with. Ajax has a powerful minion in the form of Gina Carano's Angel Dust. But Deadpool will also have some extra muscle on his side in the form of Colossus (the metal-skinned behemoth you might remember from *X-Men*) and Negasonic Teenage Warhead. Yep, for Deadpool's solo outing, Reese and Wernick plucked some of the more obscure members of the Marvel back catalogue from the vaults, adding to the off-kilter flavour.

'IF YOU'RE JUST MAKING ANOTHER SHINY SUPERHERO MOVIE, THAT GETS TIRED AFTER A WHILE. THIS IS DIFFERENT' TIM MILLER, DIRECTOR

As the sun finally breaks out in Vancouver, *Total Film* watches a scene in which the two sides (bad, and slightly less bad) square off ahead of the final showdown. At the top of the take, Reynolds lets out an almighty, "Aargh, godammit!" Turns out that Deadpool packed his bottomless, Mary Poppins-esque duffel bag with weapons, but left it in the back of a taxi. He decides to do it the old-fashioned way, "with two swords and

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HARD SELL

"When you have a character who addresses the audience directly, you're given carte blanche in terms of your marketing," says Reynolds. Here are the highlights...



LO-BLOW
Deadpool confirms the film will be R-rated by crushing presenter Mario Lopez with a TV camera... during a Ryan Reynolds interview.



TRICK OR TREAT
A Deadpool/X-Men crossover happened sooner than expected when Reynolds spent Halloween in full costume, and shared the results on YouTube.



LETHAL WEAPON
Deadpool whips his gun out for an in-your-face poster.



RUG PULL
Not every superhero announces their new film to the world with a Burt Reynolds-inspired shoot...



SPECIAL DELIVERY
Deadpool shows off his bedside manner in a classy photo tweeted by Reynolds in celebration of Mother's Day.



BLACK CHRISTMAS
The festive trailer launch gets a tease from "the other jolly guy in a red suit with a lap worth sitting on".

maximum effort," and as he calls out, "Cue the music!" DMX's 'X Gon' Give It To Ya' blares out from the on-set speakers. And the trio march forward towards Angel Dust. For the time being, 6'11" stuntman Andre Tricoteux is standing in for Colossus, but he'll be replaced with a fully CG character (and a new voice actor) in post-production. For some of the repeat takes, Deadpool and NTW are joined by someone carrying a shiny orb that'll be used to make sure Colossus' ultra-reflective surfaces match the lighting.

Former MMA star Carano describes her character as the Joe Pesci to Ajax's Robert De Niro, and her big fight scene sees her take on Colossus, which is a completely different experience to her days in the ring. "The fighting style is new to me," she smiles from under heavy eye shadow and a huge backcombed quiff. "It's more character beats, which takes more energy than just fighting. It's the emotional part of really having to act tough."

Newcomer Brianna Hildebrand plays NTW, and she'll also have a scrap with Carano at some point ("I'm scared... Fingers crossed she doesn't hurt me"), but not today. The character has explosive powers, but as an apathetic gothic teen, she's more likely to be caught texting than preparing for battle. "With Deadpool she has more of a brother-sister relationship," explains Hildebrand, dressed top-to-toe in goth gear, including a long leather jacket and black roll neck. "They hate each other, but they don't really hate each other, they're on the same side. They're always teasing each other and she doesn't want him to know that she likes him."

In a film that threatens to have more characters than *Avengers Assemble*, Deadpool also has another ally in the form of arms dealer Weasel, played here by *Silicon Valley*'s T.J. Miller. When we catch up with him some months down the line (just as he's heading in to do ADR on *Deadpool*), he repeats an oft-mentioned line about the similarities between Reynolds and his on-screen counterpart. "It's perfect for Ryan," blares T.J. Miller. "Literally Deadpool's voice: he talks how Ryan talks." It's a surprising comparison, given the Canadian actor's clean-cut reputation, but it comes up time and again, and Reynolds is the first to admit to it. "I'd say I'm closer to this than I've been with any other character," he says. "I don't know how proud I am of that, but yeah, it's kind of a match made in heaven." That side of his personality has come in handy for the off-piste improv the role sometimes requires. Given the character's 'anything goes' tone, Reynolds could >>





‘THIS IS VERY PERSONAL FOR ME. I KNOW WHAT I’VE PUT ON SCREEN IS SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE ANY FANBOY PROUD’ RYAN REYNOLDS

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FACE VALUE



Oscar-winning make-up designer Bill Corso on creating a 'scarred, messed up, screwy face' for Ryan Reynolds...

THE SOURCE

"There are so many different ways you could go with that look. [*In the comics*], they've illustrated him anywhere from little scars to like a *Walking Dead* rotted corpse. We were very gung-ho about being very faithful, and not holding back on the make-up. That being said, we still had a studio that was very cautious about going too graphic or too horrific and we still had to maintain a bit of Ryan Reynolds the sex symbol [*laughs*]. That's a crazy line to walk."

THE DESIGN

"I did four initial concepts that were very different from each other, from seeing through his skin to exposed muscle tissue, to more of a mutated kind of look. And then based on those, we all just picked things that we liked, that we gravitated towards, that we thought worked. Ryan was very concerned about [*being able to be very expressive under the make-up*], and that's part of the reason we kept everything really thin."

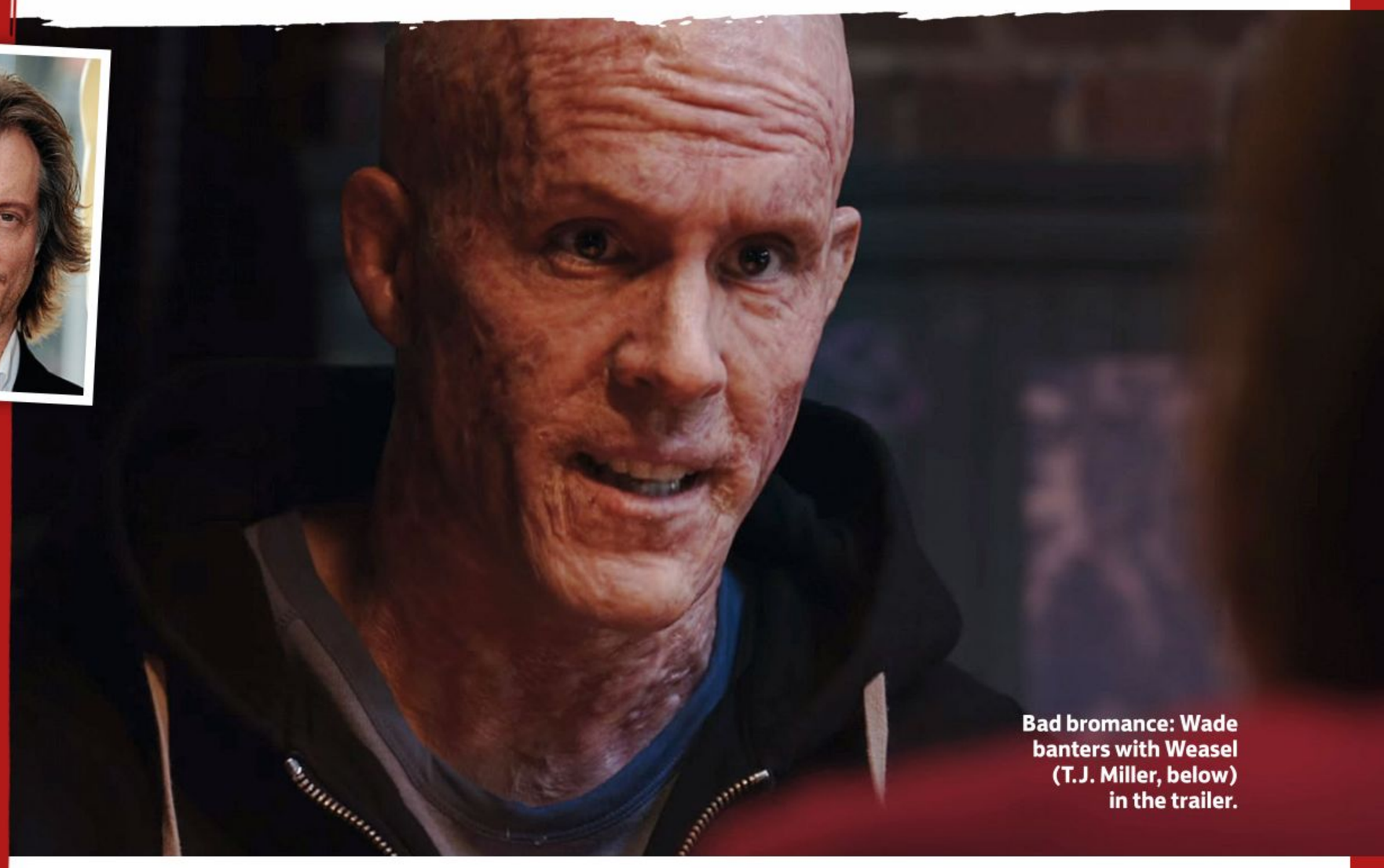
THE PROCESS

"He has a bald cap, eyebrow covers, and an under-painting over the bald cap and over the eyebrows that makes him a little more sickly and emaciated, a massive forehead piece, and a big back of the head piece, and then he had upper lip and chin [*pieces*], and then he had different necks depending on what he was wearing. The days where it's just his face and hands, that's four hours, with three people working on him. The days where he was full body was five-and-a-half to six hours. One of our references was Iggy Pop, really thin, but emaciated, sinewy muscle with veining and all that mutated skin, but on a superhero physique."

THE CLEAN-UP

"It is a very tedious, slow process to remove everything very carefully so that you don't damage the actor's skin. At the end of the evening Ryan would rip all these pieces off: he would still need to come in and get all of that membrane taken off, which could take a while, but at least he got the bulk of it off." **MM**

PA



Bad bromance: Wade banters with Weasel (T.J. Miller, below) in the trailer.

cut loose. "I heard he was a good improviser," says T.J. Miller, "but he's a *really* good improviser, and he's also just like, his voice, his humour, the way he jokes with you in general, is very Deadpool, so that was pretty fun." You can see some of the fruits of their labour in the back-and-forth about Wade's post-surgery look in the film's trailers ("You look like an avocado had sex with an older avocado"; "You look like Freddy Krueger face-fucked a topographical map of Utah"; "Like a testicle with teeth?")

Tim Miller is also forthright when it comes to the Reynolds/Deadpool comparisons. "Ryan's just incredibly fucking funny," he says. "I think he controls it in the press, but his basic personality is a lot like Deadpool." Reynolds' taste in music will even be reflected in the eclectic soundtrack, which was devised alongside the screenplay. That 'Wham!' sign we mentioned earlier? That's the reference to the '80s band, rather than a comic-book action bubble. "I love Wham!" Reynolds grins. "Andy and George killed it, and you know it." On set, Miller and Reynolds admit to occasionally having to rein themselves in when they go one step too meta. Reynolds explains later that for every fourth wall broken in the film, a version is filmed without it. "We actually found that we really didn't have enough fourth-wall breaking, so we ended up adding a few more in," he laughs of the first rough cut.

For all the joking, irreverence and silliness, it's clearly a property that means a lot to Reynolds and Miller. "There's something very proprietal and very personal about it for me," admits the star. "I know what I can put on screen, and I know what I've put on screen is something that would make any fanboy proud." The creative team are adamant that the fans own the movie, as it simply wouldn't have gone into production without the groundswell of support after the leaked footage. Promising a ton of Easter eggs for hardcore fans to sniff out, the team have always had an eye on making sure that the film connects with Deadpool newbies, too. "All anyone cares about in this process is making *Deadpool* work as much for the fanboys as it does for the uninitiated," says Reynolds.

While there will be nods to the wider X-Men universe and beyond, neither Reynolds or Miller can be tempted to look into future franchise potential for the time being. Unsurprisingly, given how closely he has clung to the character for all this time, Reynolds is going to be involved on this film until he's prised away to attend the premiere. "I can't walk away from it... I'm going to be working on this movie until it's absolutely locked," he says. "I can't wait to unleash it. We're so, so psyched. You're definitely going to be happy, that much I can promise..." TF

***Deadpool* opens on 10 February.**



THE ACTION ISSUE

COPS AND

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TRIPLE 9

ROBBERS

It's hard to know who's on what side on the mean streets of Atlanta in blurred-lines crime thriller and Heat successor, **Triple 9**. Total Film gets the 411 from an all-star cast on creating an intelligent actioner that's likely to make your 2016 top-10 list...

WORDS **JAMES MOTTRAM**



If there's a more powerful opening to a movie this year than *Triple 9*, then we're in for a hell of a ride. A dirty-cops drama with a twist of cyanide, John Hillcoat's pulsating thriller starts as it means to go on: sirens, screams and shots fill the air as five balaclava-wearing armed robbers lay siege to a downtown Atlanta bank. Not since Robert De Niro gunned his way through the streets of LA in *Heat* has there been a raid so visceral or vividly portrayed on film.

"I think we all got into it," admits Brit star Chiwetel Ejiofor, whose character – ex-military man Michael Belmont – leads this quintet as they raid the tills, safes and deposit boxes. "It had that feeling of doing it in real-time – you just felt like you were going in, doing the thing, getting out, and getting gone. It gave it a real proper intensity. It doesn't hurt that Aaron Paul is actually a really good driver! He drives the van and just peels off."

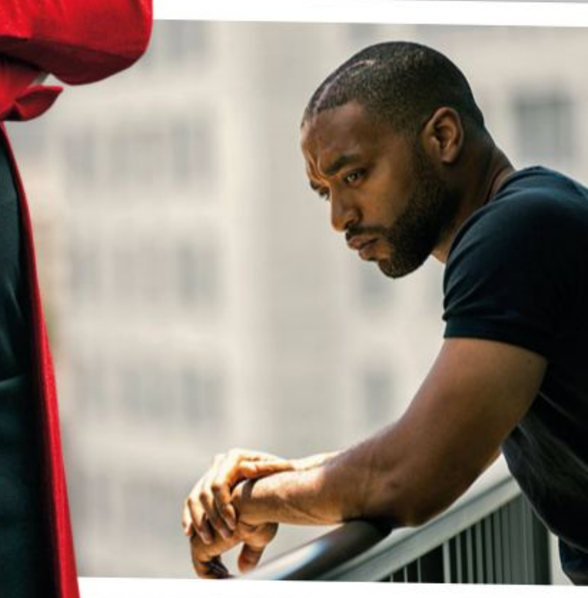
With *Breaking Bad*'s Paul featuring as ex-cop Gabe Welch, it becomes clear early on that *Triple 9*'s bad guys just so happen to be on the right side of the law. "These guys are doing it because they enjoy it," claims Anthony Mackie, who plays streetwise officer Marcus Atwood. Joining him are Gabe's brother Russell (*The Walking Dead*'s Norman Reedus) and homicide detective Franco Rodriguez (Clifton Collins Jr) – making up a highly professional, highly motivated outfit.

"When I read the script, I instantly thought of *Heat* which is one of my favourite movies of all time," says Mackie. If comparisons to Michael Mann's 1995 cop-crook classic may be fraught with danger, *Triple 9* has the steel balls to take it. "Reading something like that, the pacing and the style of it lets you know how fast it's gonna move," the actor continues. "When we got on set, it stayed in that direction. Everybody just worked in a very aggressive way to get it done."

From *Serpico* to *Dark Blue* to *Rampart*, crooked cop tales are 10 a cent in Hollywood. But scripted by newcomer Matt Cook, *Triple 9* turns the notion into something refreshingly different. It swiftly emerges that the gang are being blackmailed by a Russian-Jewish mob, who soon force them into a second near-impossible job. The only way in is to cause a major distraction – a so-called 'Triple 9'. The all-units emergency code only used when an officer is down, the 'Triple 9' is the moment when all cops make a u-turn. "It's an unspoken understanding," says Hillcoat. "If they hear that call, they'll walk away from whatever is going on to go there."







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Ink block: Chris Allen (Casey Affleck) faces an Atlanta gang and (below) Norman Reedus, Anthony Mackie and Kate Winslet also star.

The Australian director, no stranger to screen violence in films like his western *The Proposition* and Depression-era bootlegging saga *Lawless*, once witnessed such a call-to-arms in the Hollywood Hills after a fatal shooting. "I have never seen so many police and helicopters."

Of course, to stage a Triple 9, these cops need to really cross the line, and conspire to kill a fellow officer. "I just loved the moral dilemma of these corrupt cops having to kill one of their own to create a diversion," says Hillcoat. "Under pressure, people do extreme things," Ejiofor concurs. "Even for these guys, who are used to doing bad things, this is to some degree a step too far. They're already in these completely murky waters. But this was so out-and-out morally bankrupt that they all are in this quagmire."

At the opposite end of the moral spectrum is newly-transferred cop, Chris Allen (Casey Affleck) – partner to Mackie's character – a straight-shooter who's swapped the 'burbs for the violent streets of Atlanta. "He's someone with a very strict moral code," says Affleck, "a very black-and-white sense of justice." Chris' entry into the APD is family-oriented – being the nephew of Woody Harrelson's hard-drinking, old-school detective whose seemingly shambolic methodology belies a keen eye and local nous (very much in the vein of his *True Detective* performance); and who just so happens to be the cop assigned to unmasking those five bank robbers...



Open case: Woody Harrelson investigates.

LADY KILLER

For all its machismo, *Triple 9* is not just another male-driven actioner, though. At the core of the story is Irina Vlaslov, a Russian-Jewish "princess", as Ejiofor dubs her, who might just be your worst nightmare. Ruthless and callous, Irina will crush anyone under her designer heels. Or order their teeth pulled from their head. Playing her? Kate Winslet. Yes, let that soak in. The genteel Oscar-winning star of *The Reader*. "I can't express how excited she was to play a villain," says Hillcoat. "She's never had that chance." (Presumably Hillcoat's not seen the *Divergent* series...)

Deputising in the absence of her incarcerated kingpin husband, it transpires that Irina has roped in Ejiofor's Belmont and his gang to pull jobs to secure her spouse's release. How? By threatening to kill each and every one of them if they don't. But there's an added emotional bind: her younger sister Yelena (Gal Gadot) just so happens to be the mother of Belmont's young son, currently residing with Aunty Irina.

Returning to a genre he's previously explored in *Four Brothers* and *American Gangster*, Ejiofor admits playing Belmont threw him for a loop. "It's a weird place to sit around in for a while – a guy who is totally, in my mind, morally bankrupt. But still very much a human being, very much in love with his kid and just trying to sort out the family responsibilities as much as anything else." He pauses. "Albeit within a world where everything is upside down and the ethics are completely removed."

Playing the link between the gang and their East European paymasters means that Ejiofor gets to share the screen with Winslet – in her power-suits, killer heels and bouffant 'do. "She created this character, this persona. Not somebody I'd ever met necessarily but somebody I was immediately familiar with. I really understood this person somehow and knew that they were in the world. In a litany of brilliant Kate Winslet performances, it's another one to add to them."

For Hillcoat, it chimed perfectly with what he'd been reading. "In different criminal groups, sometimes when the leader goes to prison, his wife takes over and is even more of a lethal force." He cites the 2006 documentary *Cocaine Cowboys*, which zeroed in on the Miami drug wars and one of its most feared proponents, notorious Colombian 'godmother' Griselda Blanco.

'WE FILMED IN SOME VERY DANGEROUS LOCATIONS. ATLANTA HAS THIS INCREDIBLE DIVIDE BETWEEN WEALTH AND POVERTY' JOHN HILLCOAT

"The whole skyline of Miami was built in the '80s and at the top of the pecking order was this woman that everyone feared."

Miami vice is something viewers have seen before, but placing the action in the very heart of Atlanta, Georgia offered a fresh take. Though the area conjures up ideas of Southern gentility, Antebellum mansions and *Gone With The Wind*, Atlanta provided plenty of raw gang-violence reality – with Hillcoat seeking out its seediest locations. "We filmed in some very dangerous locations that no one had filmed in," he remarks. "Atlanta... It reminds me of the tension that used to be in LA on the streets 20 years ago. What's happening there... It's a bit of a microcosm of all of America that's in a dynamic flux, as we speak. We have this incredible divide between wealth and poverty." >>

Cruising around the most run-down areas of the city, *Triple 9* uses its locales like a filth-encrusted canvas for this drama of greed, revenge and betrayal to unfold. "Atlanta is a very posh but dirty city," says Mackie. "There's a lot of right and wrongs... You have very harsh extremes. You can go to Buckhead and see the million dollar homes and then you can go to College Park and see the other side of Atlanta. So when you have a backdrop like that, it lends itself to the characters."

Cut to the sound of Cyprus Hill's inflammatory track 'Pigs' (with resonant lyrics like "This pig works for the mafia") – remixed by Hillcoat's Oscar-winning composer Atticus Ross – *Triple 9* is utterly contemporary in its depiction of the highly-organised Latino gangs, who employ terror tactics to retain control of the streets. "The fact is, a lot of these criminal organisations have sprung out of paramilitary-trained people," says Hillcoat.

Arriving at a time when protests against police brutality are making headline news in the US, Hillcoat notes that excessive force stems from the stakes having risen on both sides. "On the one hand, you have these military criminal groups but you also have the militarisation of the police. So now they have tanks. Every cop in Atlanta has SWAT training. There is almost like a marriage between the military and law-enforcement."

Affleck, who spent time with the gang unit of the Atlanta Police Department, saw first-hand just what an impossible job being a cop is. "It's an alienating experience," he says. "You sit in the car and people look at you differently as you drive by. Me, myself, sitting in my little car puttering down the street gets no reaction from the pedestrians as I go past. But if you're sitting in a police car – marked or unmarked – the range of looks that you get go from wary to suspicious to resentful to all kinds of things."

Fresh off crime yarns like *Gangster Squad*, Mackie "is very familiar with these worlds", says his director – a statement that makes the actor boom with laughter when *Total Film* relays it back. So who does he hang with in his spare time? "I have a bunch of friends who are cops," he shrugs. "I have a bunch of friends who are dirty cops! The reality is, portraying a cop... I don't have to spend time with them to do that. I feel like I know what a cop is. So I went into the project very clear about what I wanted to portray and how I wanted to come across."

Curiously the 'dirty cops' scenes – shot after Harrelson and Affleck, former co-stars on Scott Cooper's redneck crime saga *Out Of The Furnace*, had reunited – changed the tone of the shoot. "The crew, they were like, 'Man, this is two completely different movies,'" says Mackie. "We brought a completely different energy, a completely different vibe to it, because we were just being jackasses and goofing off the whole time! The other part was so serious... They were really caught up in the work. We were like: 'We're dirty cops – we'll have a good time!'"




Mob boss: Kate Winslet (playing Irina Vlaslov) consults with director John Hillcoat.

CHARGE SHEET

5 upcoming crime films that should be on your radar...

FREE FIRE
Ben Wheatley goes Stateside for this old-school *Reservoir Dogs*-like tale set in Boston in 1978, as two gangs meet in a deserted warehouse and sparks fly. Armie Hammer, Brie Larson, Sam Riley and Cillian Murphy lead the stellar cast.

CRIMINAL
Director Ariel Vromen already put his stamp on the crime genre with hit tale *The Iceman*. This latest effort sees Kevin Costner turn nasty as a dangerous inmate who gets a brain-boost when a dead CIA operative's skills are implanted in his head.

TRESPASS AGAINST US
Michael Fassbender and his *Macbeth* co-star Sean Harris team up for this tale of a man trying to leave his criminal family behind. The feature debut of Adam Smith (*Skins*), it also includes a score from dance music pioneers The Chemical Brothers.

GREEN ROOM
More gangbangers here, as director Jeremy Saulnier follows up his revenge tale *Blue Ruin* with this gripping tale of a punk band holed up in a dive bar and facing off with a shady band of Neo-Nazis led by none other than Patrick Stewart.

I AM WRATH
Originally set to star Nicolas Cage and be directed by William Friedkin, now it's *Eraser*'s Chuck Russell calling the shots as a goatee-wearing John Travolta goes vigilante, punishing a group of corrupt cops that fail to catch his wife's killer.

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Bad lieutenants: (l-r) Chiwetel Ejiofor, Aaron Paul, Clifton Collins Jr and Anthony Mackie are part of the corrupt cop contingent.

RED ALERT

If anything marks out *Triple 9*, it's Hillcoat's attitude to violence: graphic but not gratuitous. "I don't think he's Tarantino when it comes to violence," says Mackie. "But he makes you uncomfortable. He shows you the ugliness of violence." An early example, our first introduction to Winslet's Irina, sees her walk past a pleading couple – bloodied, battered and in the boot of a car. A bag full of teeth is dumped in with them. Chillingly, we never see them again. In another scene three gang members' decapitated heads are seen casually propped up on a car.

"I think John likes violence in movies," smirks Affleck. "All of his movies have some violence in them – it seems to get him going! He likes having the prosthetic heads and fake blood on the hood of a car; there's a little bit of a horror movie director in him somewhere!" The boiling tar-and-feather scene in *Lawless* or the exploding head in *The Proposition* suggest Affleck has a point.

"It's not to be gratuitous," argues Hillcoat. "I always try to find psychological consequences. Whichever side you're on, there's a lot of grey in the film, morally. And that's what I wanted to explore – the way all those lines are blurred. When it comes to violence, there are always consequences to both sides. No-one walks out the victor, unscathed." Indeed, bloodshed in *Triple 9* always comes with a price. "Whether it's a military battle, a bank robbery, a gangster shoot-out on the streets or an assassination, there's always an element of chaos," the director adds. "It's messy, it's brutal, it's terrifying." It brings us back to that opening bank robbery. "I wanted to get to that chaos and messiness. I don't know if you noticed – which happens a lot in bank robberies – one of the tellers is literally pissing herself." Confusion, fear, adrenaline, anger – it's all in that opener.

'I THINK JOHN HILLCOAT LIKES VIOLENCE – IT SEEMS TO GET HIM GOING! THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF A HORROR MOVIE DIRECTOR IN HIM SOMEWHERE...' CASEY AFFLECK

Already the posters for *Triple 9* are seared with a stunning image from that early robbery – when booby-trapped swag means a red smoke canister explodes in the getaway vehicle on a busy highway. The reality was somewhat different. "That was a disaster!" laughs Mackie. "They would fill the car with red smoke... You literally can't breathe and you're covered with shit and smoke! It was just a bunch of whiney fucking actors sitting in a car, saying 'I need air! I can't breathe!'"

If *Heat* was the template, it wasn't the only touchstone. Affleck recalls *The French Connection*, referenced for "the energy of it and the intimate, visceral feel". Ejiofor nods to the Dustin Hoffman bank robbery tale *Straight Time* while Hillcoat likens Cook's script to "a [*Sidney*] Lumet film, in terms of that potential moral murkiness". But *Triple 9* doesn't feel derivative. "It definitely has its own flavour and its own style," smiles Mackie. For Hillcoat, it was all about shifting the genre away from fantasy cops-and-robbers yarns. "I wanted a foot in reality that, a lot of times, I feel thrillers no longer really have." And nothing seems overblown. The story, says Ejiofor, belongs in the everyday. "It's like a real, very, very active part of the world – a very scary part of the world but not drawn big."

Put out an APB: this is the thriller of the year. TF

***Triple 9* is out on 19 February.**

THE ACTION ISSUE

BOUNCING BACK

The Hunger Games is over, and now The Divergent Series begins its bow out with the first of a two-parter finale that ups the ante and broadens the scope. Total Film goes on set of **Allegiant** as the team face a world beyond the wall – and beyond a franchise... WORDS: **STEPHEN KELLY**

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BARRIES N

You'll have seen it in the trailer: the moment where the heroes of *The Divergent Series: Allegiant*, led by Shailene Woodley's Tris, are bolting for their lives, pursued by unseen forces. They flee across a field, running and running until they see an enormous stone wall – the kind that keeps giants out. A dead-end? Not exactly. They scamper towards it, letting grappling hooks fly. They run *up* the wall, 60ft to the top. A race towards the heavens. How's that for action?

"That was *crazy*," Woodley says, taking a break from filming, cheeks glowing red. "We were suspended in the air with all these harnesses and wires. We also [*did some crazy stunts*] in a rock quarry. There were no harnesses that time – it was just legit rock-climbing gear. I've definitely learned to appreciate action films in a way I never did before; in the sense that actors have to interlace real emotional trauma with heavy breathing. There's multiple occasions where you're out of breath and you have to take two minutes between each take because you might pass out from hyperventilation, because your lungs don't actually have air in them but you have to pretend like they do."

By comparison, this afternoon's shoot in Atlanta is pretty easy-going. Woodley is dancing, for a start; singing 'Roxanne' by The Police as she waits for a take with Naomi Watts, Theo James, Ansel Elgort and Miles Teller. The latter, it should be said, has not stopped talking since we got here – most of which is extremely funny, but wildly unprintable. "He's fun in the beginning," Elgort says, sighing theatrically. "For the first 10 days."

We stand in a huge, grey chamber, with tubes hanging from the ceiling like spaghetti – a set re-purposed from the final scenes of *Insurgent*, where Woodley's Tris was being held captive by Jeanine (Kate Winslet). Naomi Watts, playing freedom fighter Evelyn, is hobbling, having just been shot, and is being comforted by her on-screen son, James. Along with Woodley and Elgort, who plays Tris' brother Caleb, they're all crowded around a control panel, bashing buttons in a desperate attempt to halt a flood of 'memory gas' which will soon drown their city and destroy everyone they love. We'd tell you more but it's a big, spoilerific scene, taking place as it does in *Allegiant*'s final act. Plus, you know, it's all a bit, uh, hazy.

What's clear, though, is that this is the beginning of the end for *The Divergent Series*, the young adult franchise adapted from the books of Veronica Roth. Or, rather, part one of the end – given that Roth's third and final book, à la *The Hunger Games*, has been split into two films: *Allegiant* and 2017's *Ascendant*. Together they will conclude the story of Tris Prior, who lives in a future Chicago where society has been divided into five factions, its citizens sorted according to personality at the age of 16. Raised as a selfless Abnegation, Tris tries to become a brave Dauntless, only to be revealed as divergent: someone who will never be able to fit into any one faction, and who is therefore seen as a threat by the ruling Erudite (intellectuals) government.

Released in 2014, *Divergent* hit cinemas just two years after the phenomenally successful first installment of *The Hunger Games* (also produced by Lionsgate). Its themes were brighter and >>

broader, playing out the social politics of high school – of being different, of fitting in – on a grand scale. Tonally, too, it was younger – the pop song to *The Hunger Games*' rock; the Ellie Goulding to its Arcade Fire. Some critics called cash-in: the cynical aftershock of a cultural quake. But if *Twilight* (also made by Lionsgate) has taught us anything, it's that some films are beyond cynicism. After all, there's a reason why *Divergent*, and last year's sequel *Insurgent*, have a combined worldwide gross of $585.9m.

"I think you have to leave your cynicism at the door," says Douglas Wick, who co-produces the series alongside Lucy Fisher. "Because *Divergent* is accessible and Tris connects with the audience in a different way. [*Veronica Roth*] was really trying to express something about identity and growing up, and that has great power in it. I've been doing this for a very long time and I can tell you that whenever you set out to make a successful young adult movie, you're probably doomed."

'TO PAY YOUR BILLS OFF JUST BY ACTING IS AN INCREDIBLE FEAT'
MILES TELLER

And yet there's no denying that stretching one book across two films isn't something that typically inspires confidence. Surely this is all an evil, money-grabbing conspiracy?

"There was just a lot of story to tell," laughs Fisher. "We had a challenge with every single book: Veronica packs a lot of plot and characters in and we felt that we never got to service them all. We're always apologising to the actors that their characters didn't get to do as much as they do in the book, otherwise we'd have a five-hour movie. So it's about having the time and space to do that."

"We were very intent on making it a story in its own right," adds Wick. "And that's why we chose this moment from the book because it was very climactic, a real resolution." He gestures to the scene we're watching, where gas has just started to engulf the chamber, much to our heroes' chagrin.

"There's so many other rich things to explore too," Wick continues. "We were surprised with how much the audience connected with Tris' story with her mother, for example. We also had a lot of tension to play with Tris and her brother Caleb, who had observed her torture in *Insurgent*. There's Four (James) and his mother Evelyn (Naomi Watts); Four and Tris' relationship; and the dark side of Peter (Miles Teller). What if he can be redeemed? On a more tragic note, we also have the direction of Tris' character. But we don't like to talk about that."

Directed by *Insurgent*'s Robert Schwentke (*The Time Traveller's Wife*, *R.I.P.D.*), *Allegiant* picks up right after the revelation that, for the past 200 years, the walled city of Chicago (and its faction system) has actually been an experiment, and that the world is waiting for them to venture outside. Hence the aforementioned run up that 60ft wall. On the other side is a wasteland scorched by the Purity War: a time when the government, in the belief that society's problems were caused by 'bad' genes, began to modify them, with disastrous results. It's here that they meet those behind the experiment – the Bureau of Genetic Welfare – and its leader David, played by Jeff Daniels. Unsurprisingly, things don't go too well; tipping the world, once again, into conflict. But this is the point when the series finally begins to open up – not only in terms of setting, scale and scope, but thematics too.

"It talks a lot about genetic manipulation and what that can cause in the future," says Woodley, "and I think that's worth putting out there, especially in the mind of young millennials: for them to understand that the choices we make and determine today will one day manifest themselves, and the future is dependent on what we choose to allow now."

Woodley says a lot of stuff like this, often directing her answers to take in the environment:



Field of dreams: Tris (Shailene Woodley) and Four (Theo James) lead the Allegiant faction outside the fence.

the dangers of fracking, the future of global warming. She is, after all, a woman who likes to forage for her own food, who makes medicine out of herbs, and goes into the mountains for spring water. Live-tweet *The X Factor*, she does not.

"I remember when she first walked through the door," says Fisher of her lead. "She was so young and sweet and we thought, 'Right, we've got the Abnegation thing, now let's worry about the Dauntless part.' We asked what she was doing this weekend, and she said she was doing an urban kidnapping where they take away your car keys and your licence and you have to get from one place to another on your own. And there was the Dauntless."

Woodley has come a long way since then, with both *Divergent* and 2014 John Green adaptation *The Fault In Our Stars*, co-starring Elgort, seeing her build on the early potential demonstrated in *The Descendants*, playing George Clooney's daughter. Even so, *Allegiant* isn't just Tris anymore. Her screen-time is now divided between her and Four, who must face not only their own crumbling relationship, but his factionless mother, who now rules over Chicago after killing Jeanine at the end of *Insurgent*.




DAVID


EVELYN

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"The first two movies are very much told through the context of Tris," says James, who was picked for the part on the back of his life-changing turn as Mr Pamuk in *Downton Abbey*. "You follow the story through her eyes, whereas in this film we're slowly diverging from that so you see certain events from both of their perspectives, which causes them to butt heads. For example, they clash over Jeff Daniels' character, David, who she's kind of wooed by, but Four sees through. And then there's his mother, who he's not heard from in 20 years, so he pushes her away. In the end, though, he realises that she's coming from that place of coldness for a reason."

Teller, who plays the reliably untrustworthy Peter, is another of *Divergent*'s cast to crawl out of obscurity, having wowed critics in 2014 with his starring role in jazz-thriller *Whiplash*. He's bright, polite and funny; here, giving Theo James the middle finger, is obviously where he feels at home.

"I like to have fun on set," he laughs. "You really get to throw yourself into a story and then, after it's done, you go back home, pay your bills, have a shower. But when you're on set it's this really freeing experience. For me, as I'm getting more exposure, I get more self-conscious when I'm out in public. Like, if I just walk into a store and then I see someone take a photo of me or hovering to ask something. But when you're on set, no one is trying to manipulate you, or get a tabloid story out of you. You can completely be yourself."

A month after chatting to *TF* on set, *GQ Magazine* will brand Teller a 'dick' in a profile piece (not our experience), and the *Fantastic Four* reboot, co-starring Teller as Reed Richards, will become a notorious failure, both critically and financially. Speaking about franchises versus indies, he strikes an ominous note.

"I think movies this size play in other countries – and a lot of smaller movies that I do, even if they're really well-received critically, it's hard for them to go around. People always want to say, 'Oh you're just doing it for the money,' and they really criticise you for what you're doing. But in reality, yeah, at some point you have to do a movie with a studio to buy a car or just pay the bills. To pay your bills off just by acting is an incredible feat. Most people are not."

"I take acting very seriously," he continues. "The '70s actors I love – Pacino, De Niro, Hoffman – they weren't making these big comic-book movies. It was a different thing. Studios were making dramas then. Studios don't really make dramas now, so you have to bet on this first-time director because he did a short film and the script is really good."

And how about Woodley? Back in 2013, when the offer for *Divergent* first came in, she was reluctant to take on a big-budget franchise, having just come off a six-year contract on ABC TV show *The Secret Life Of An American Teenager*. She found the prospect of another four-year commitment "daunting," and wasn't sure if she wanted the recognition. How does she feel about it now?

"It was a great decision [*to do it*]," she says. "I mean, I never thought about *Divergent* [*as a jumping-off point for my career*]. If you start thinking about your craft as a tool to get to somewhere else, it loses the artistic part of it. But the beautiful thing about doing a series is you establish a family, especially among all these actors. It's so exciting to see everyone's careers take off, to support one another and have that sense of comfort. But it's funny..." She pauses, grins. "You never wanna say never but I'm definitely ready to maybe not do another franchise immediately." TF

***The Divergent Series: Allegiant* opens on 11 March.**


FOUR

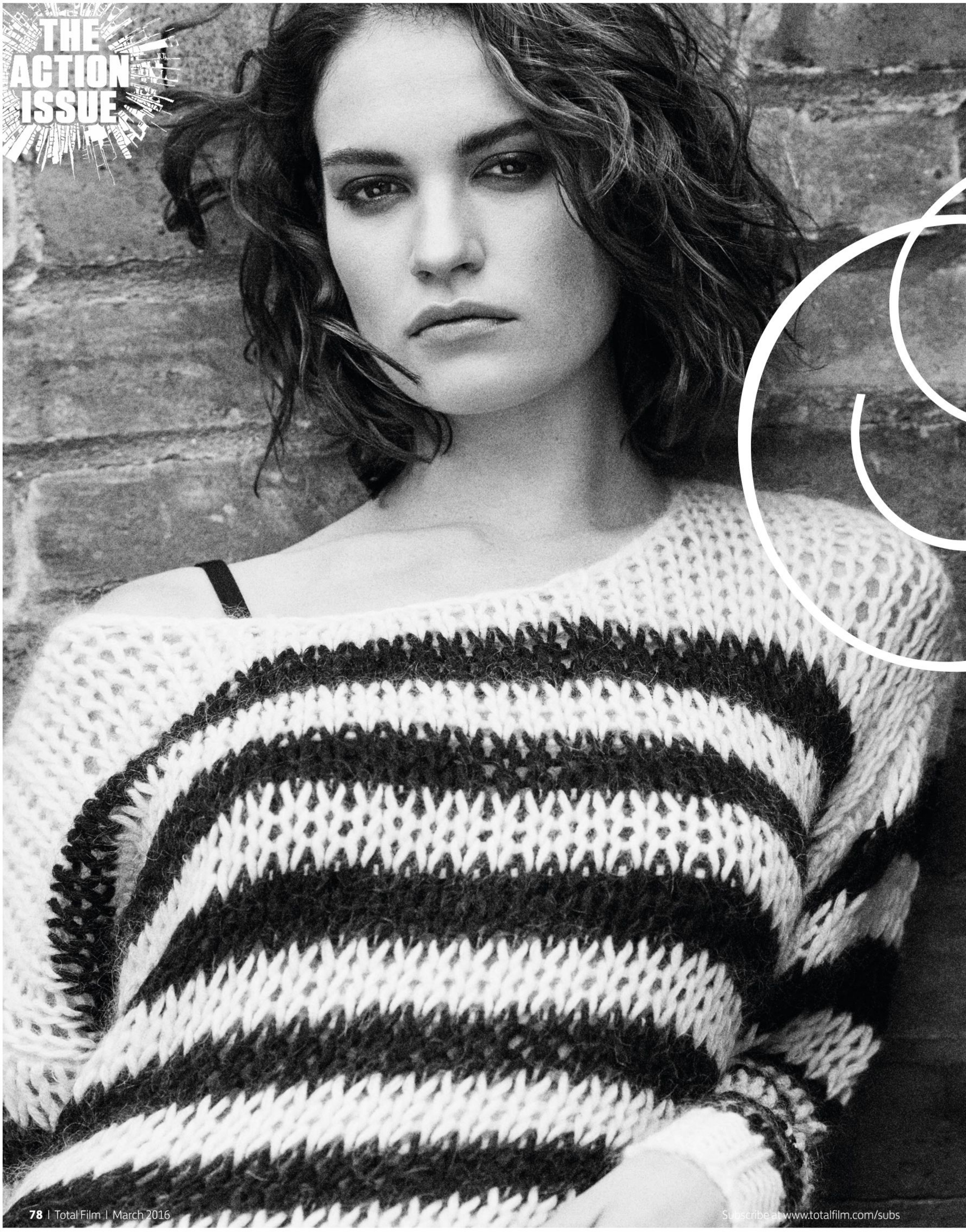

CHRISTINA


CALEB


PETER


TRIS


MATTHEW



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Lily Buster

She shot to fame as Downton's Lady Rose and Cinders, but now she's loosening her stays and kicking rotting ass in comi-horror-actioner Pride And Prejudice And Zombies. Total Film meets Lily James.

WORDS **JANE CROWTHER** PORTRAIT **JEM MITCHELL / TRUNK ARCHIVE**

Lily James has battled her way through a shambling horde to meet *Total Film* at a private members club in London's Soho. Just steps away from the quiet civililty of the Georgian interior and roaring open fire, chaos reigns on the pavements of Oxford Street. "Zombie Christmas shoppers!" James laughs as she flops into one of the wing-backed chairs, casually dressed in grey bobble hat and black-and-white-striped jumper, fresh-faced and full of smiles.

An apt joke – for though the 26-year-old Brit has been singing in Russian this morning for elegant new BBC mini-series *War And Peace* and is prepping for a run of *Romeo And Juliet* at The Garrick directed by Kenneth Branagh, Miss James is about to blast her gentile image (cultivated by a long-running role as lovely Lady Rose in *Downton Abbey*) with a spot of good old-fashioned skull-busting, head-lopping, blood-splattering undead disposal.

Playing shaolin-trained Elizabeth Bennet in the big screen adaptation of Seth Grahame-Smith's cult novel, which splices Jane Austen's classic tome with a zombie apocalypse, James may still be wearing a corset (her tiny waist-whittler on *Cinderella* provoking many column inches), but she's certainly not sitting around looking pretty. In fact, in many scenes the gentlemen are the damsels in distress while the Bennet girls ride, and slice, to the rescue.

"When I read the script, I loved the idea of doing action and being so in control of that," James enthuses, a self-confessed *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* fan. "And yes, the protagonist is a woman. You don't get much cooler and more empowered than Liz Bennet, anyway – so add into that this crazy setting, and the fact that she's a warrior and she can fight; she can high kick and behead zombies... I wouldn't have wanted to play her straight because I think she's been done really well a number of times already." >>

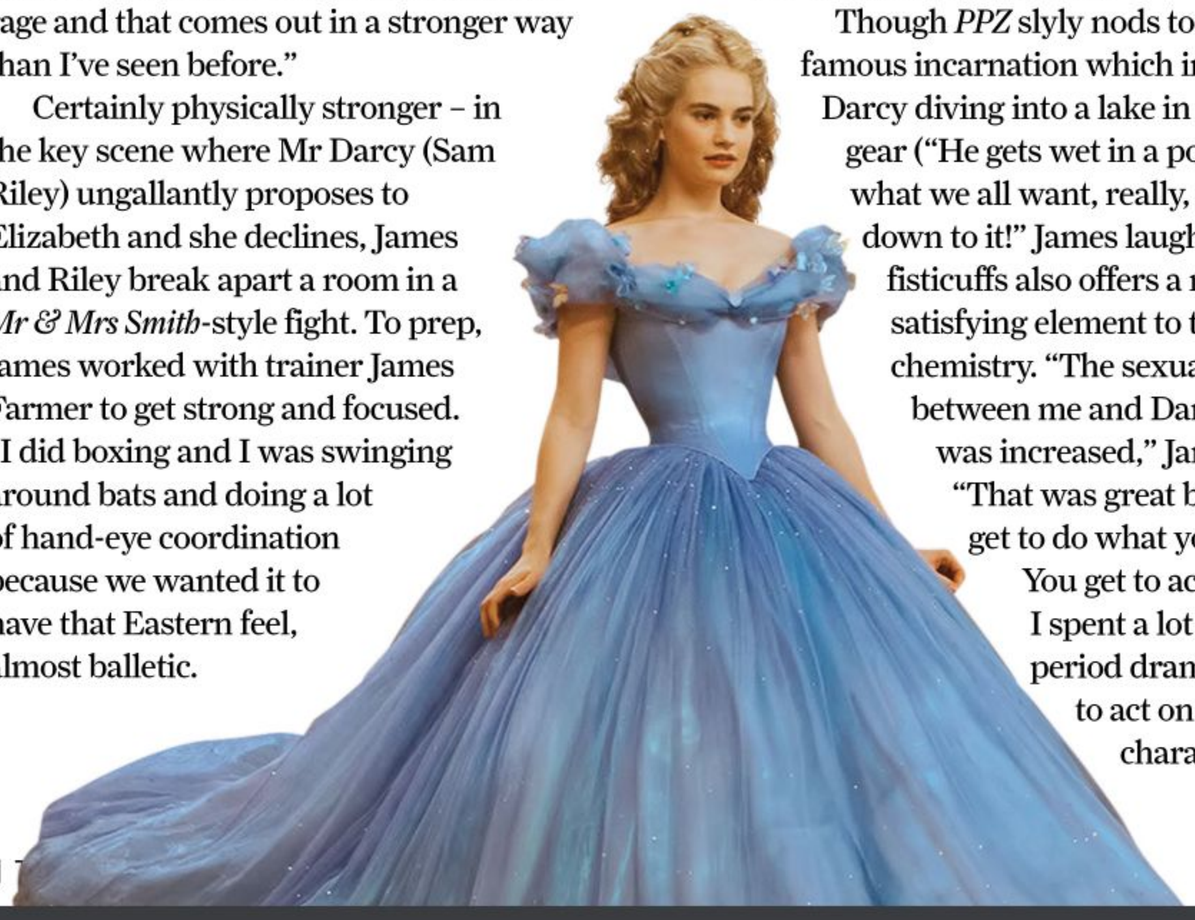


Regency rumble: James' Liz Bennet teams up with Mr Darcy (Sam Riley), Mr Collins (Matt Smith) and sister Lydia (Ellie Bamber) in *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies*; (right) Liz and Jane (Bella Heathcore) tool up and (below) James wows in *Cinderella*.

As she pours a glass of orange juice, fine silver rings glinting on her fingers, she recalls that she watched Keira Knightley in Joe Wright's version the night before the first cast read-through but that once on-set, swords at hand and daggers in stockings, she made the role her own.

"I do think my Liz Bennet's very different. Because of the setting – zombies – everything is life and death. Because of that physical output of your inner conflict that Liz Bennet has, I feel that she's very angry and full of rage and that comes out in a stronger way than I've seen before."

Certainly physically stronger – in the key scene where Mr Darcy (Sam Riley) ungallantly proposes to Elizabeth and she declines, James and Riley break apart a room in a *Mr & Mrs Smith*-style fight. To prep, James worked with trainer James Farmer to get strong and focused. "I did boxing and I was swinging around bats and doing a lot of hand-eye coordination because we wanted it to have that Eastern feel, almost balletic.



Although the amount of times I punched Sam Riley in the face or in the leg... By the end of that fight we did together, he was completely bruised. I either go for it or I don't!"

Though *PPZ* slyly nods to Colin Firth's famous incarnation which included Mr Darcy diving into a lake in full riding gear ("He gets wet in a pond, and that's what we all want, really, when it comes down to it!" James laughs), the characters' fisticuffs also offers a more physically satisfying element to the protagonists' chemistry. "The sexual connection between me and Darcy, I think, was increased," James smiles. "That was great because you get to do what you want to do. You get to act on it. And I spent a lot of time in period dramas not getting to act on what the character wants."

James has certainly spent a good chunk of her professional life at Downton Abbey, playing the feisty Lady Rose. A schoolmate of Daisy Ridley (they both attended Tring Park School For The Performing Arts and James forbids discussion of *The Force Awakens* as she has tickets booked for opening weekend), her debut in the beloved show opened doors and provided valuable extra training.

"It's totally shaped my career, and I'm so grateful and I loved making it. Working with Maggie Smith, you can't help but learn and get more confident and just understand how filming works." That tuition is at an end now that *Downton* is done for good. "It's good to finish when people still want more," James says. "Plus, we just couldn't age up anymore. It was getting ridiculous! But of course, everyone was really sad when it finished. At the wrap party, even Hugh Bonneville shed a tear."

Though she was looking for something different after period gigs in *Downton* and

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Cinderella (she cited *Room* as the sort of project she'd want) James felt she couldn't turn down two classic projects that came her way; Natasha in Tolstoy's *War And Peace* ("it's so epic" she assures), and Juliet to *Cinderella* co-star Richard Madden's Romeo onstage. "I can never say 'no' to Natasha. And also *Romeo And Juliet*. If I had picked and planned out my year, I probably would have thought, 'I'd do something edgy and modern and young and hip'..." Suddenly self-aware, she checks herself. "The word 'edgy' – I use it all the time. It's the worst word, isn't it?" She laughs. "Kenneth [*Branagh*] said to me, 'You don't need to rush to prove you're something else. You've got a really long career, if that's what you're in it for.'"

That said, James has booked herself an 'edgy' role in Edgar Wright's heist drama *Baby Driver*, filming in New Orleans. She'll be playing a modern-day American waitress who is "not just the love-interest, she's kick-arse in her own way." James says it's the most exciting script she's ever seen (coming as it did complete with its own app so that Wright's choice of music soundtrack and sound FX played as she read) and can't wait to explore the Big Easy. After that, she says, she wants to leave things open.

'I was swinging bats around; we wanted it to have a balletic feel'
LILY JAMES

"I do think there's something really liberating about not knowing what you're doing. It's quite easy, especially as a young actor, when you hear this word 'momentum' a lot and it's quite tempting, if there's a bit of heat, to just book yourself up, to ensure that you're working. But I don't know if that's actually the best way to do it."

Her most immediate concern is getting her Christmas shopping done, especially for her boyfriend, former Timelord Matt Smith – who she is full of eye-dancing praise for when discussing his role as the odious Mr Collins in *PPZ*. The two (who were together when they were cast) share a moment onscreen when Smith proposes to James. "I loved him proposing to me," she laughs. "I was like, 'No, yeah, no.' And I loved working with him. He is such a brilliant actor. He is so imaginative." She won't be drawn further on their relationship, only admitting that an actor boyfriend understands more than most her currently crazy life. And though together they get papped, alone she can slip through town undisturbed. Unless, of course, eagle-eyed little girls spy Cinderella.



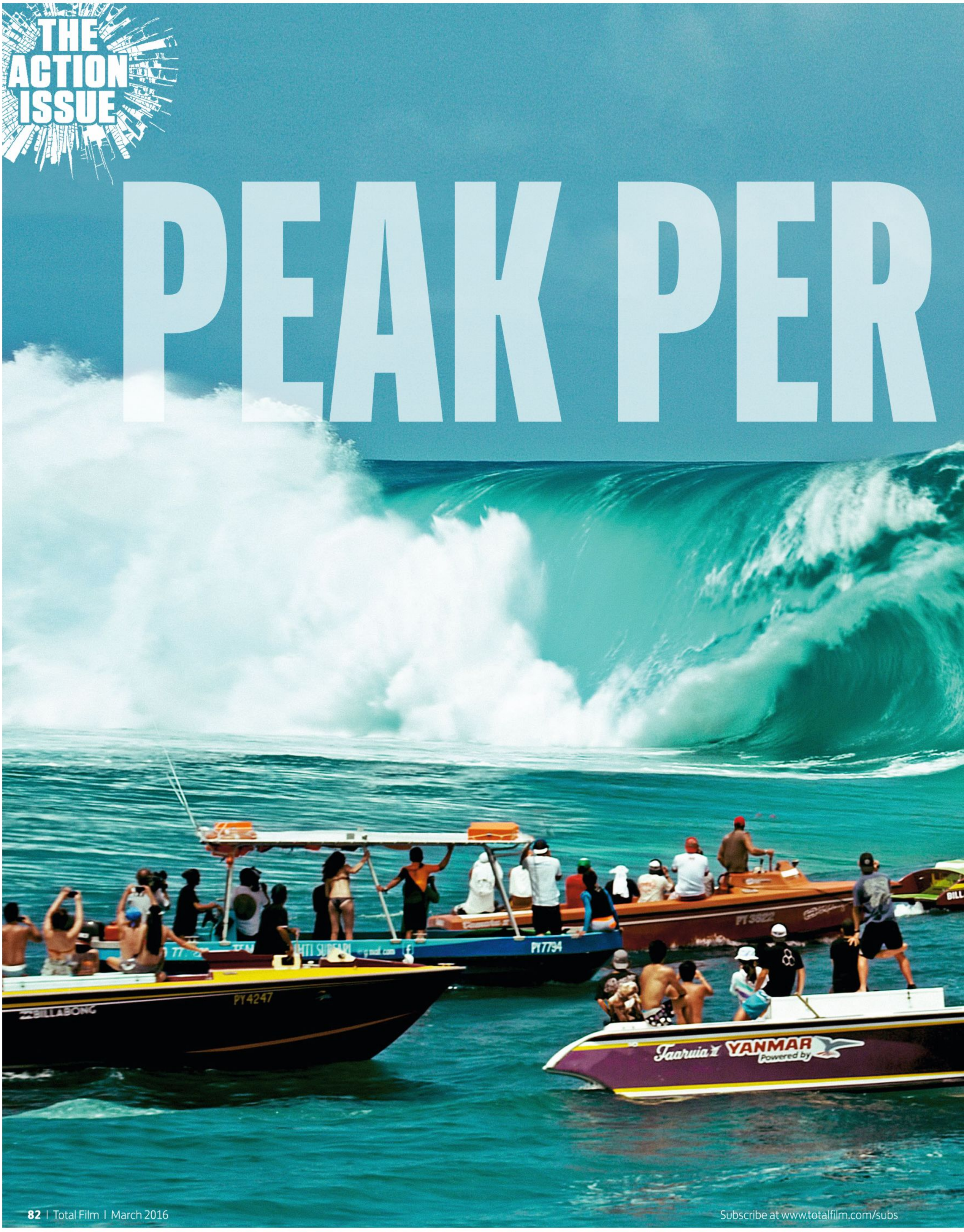
Back in time: as Lady Rose in Downton Abbey and (above) as Natasha Rostov in *War And Peace*.

"They ask me, 'Is the Fairy Godmother real?' I'm like, 'Absolutely!'" She would know – James seems to be casting her own kind of spell at the moment with cracking roles. But don't think that it's gone to her head. She's resolutely down to earth, especially in her shopping. As she gets up to go she recalls her recent homewares disaster; "I thought I was a superwoman – I went to Habitat the other day and I bought a lamp, a bedside table, and suddenly I thought, 'How am I going to get this out of here?'" And with that, she's gone into the zombie crowd... TF

***Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* opens on 12 February. *War And Peace* is on BBC1 now. *Romeo And Juliet* opens on 13 May.**

THE ACTION ISSUE

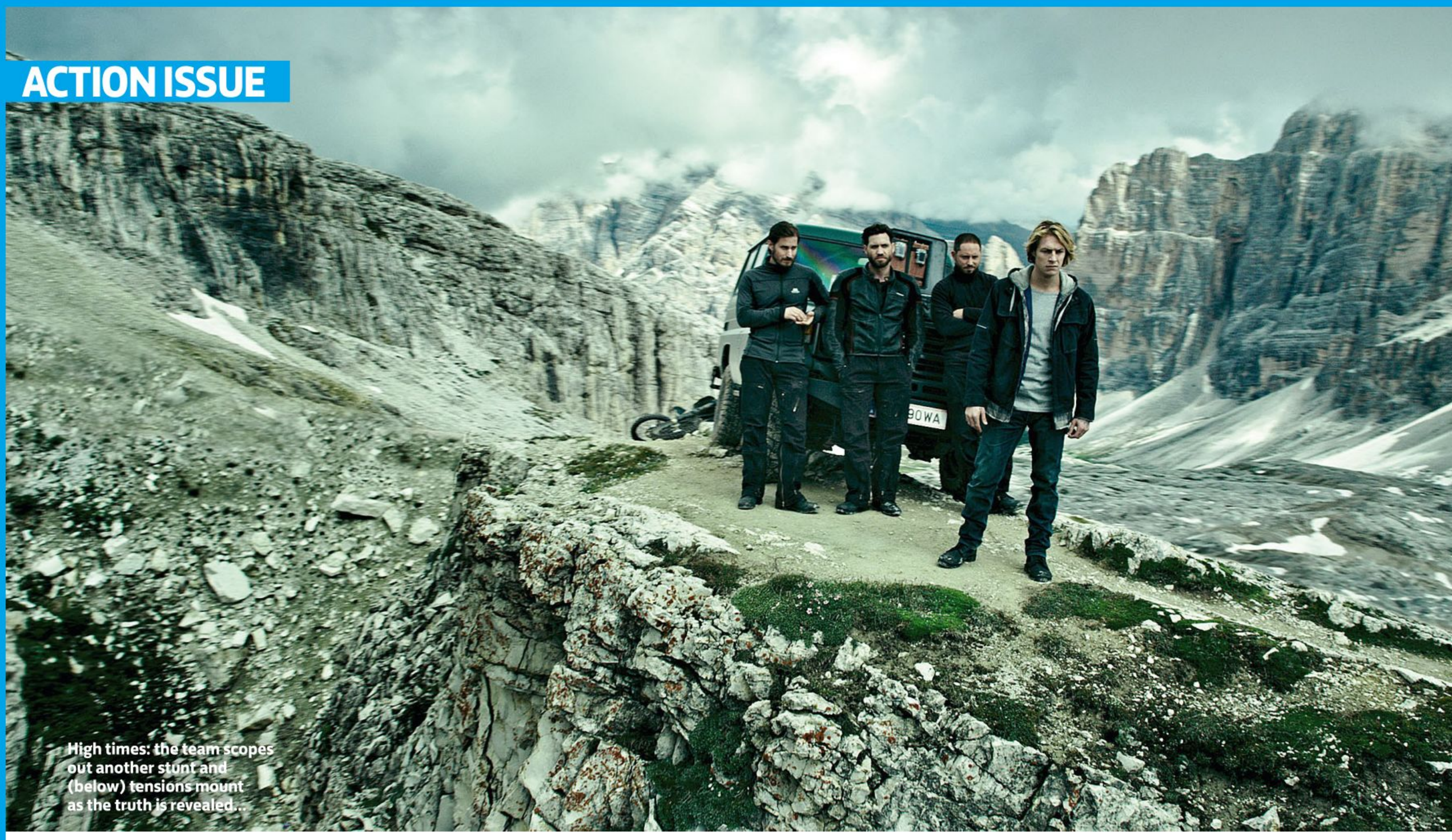
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FORMANCE

Twenty-five years after **Point Break** surfed on-screen, a new crew is updating it, pushing the conceit and stunts to the limit. Total Film climbs on set in search of an adrenaline rush... WORDS **SAM ASHURST**



High times: the team scopes out another stunt and (below) tensions mount as the truth is revealed...

Wearing a thick winter coat and gloves, Édgar Ramírez is limping. He takes a seat opposite *Total Film* in a tent on the side of a mountain and gingerly lifts his left foot onto a small stool. "I twisted my ankle yesterday," he tells us with a shrug. "I jumped over a motorcycle, landed the wrong way, and twisted it. It's fine, it's part of what happens when you shoot an action movie." And not just any action movie. We're on set of *Point Break*, Ericson Core's global-focused remake of the iconic '90s flick, which adds extreme sports (proximity flying, off-road motorbiking, snowboarding) to the more recognisable skydiving/surfing sequences created by Keanu Reeves' FBI mole, Johnny Utah, and Patrick Swayze's wave-riding robber, Bodhi, in Kathryn Bigelow's adrenaline-soaked original. And in pursuit of white-knuckle reality, a sprained ankle is the least of Ramírez's hairy moments during filming.

It's August 2014 and *TF* has tasted some small-scale action of its own just to get to set, having clambered up a 22-thousand-foot mountain, high in the Austrian Alps, walking in single file on a tiny path alongside a sheer cliff. Though it's nominally summer, it's freezing. We began our journey on a clear morning, with mist and moisture hanging in the air. Clouds covered nearby peaks, obscuring them like a distant fog. Now we've reached our destination, heavy rain starts to fall, and the crew breaks out large umbrellas with grim resolution. It's here, ducked down behind a toppled truck, that *TF* will watch a key scene between leads Ramírez (Bodhi) and Luke Bracey (Utah) as they face off after a pivotal car smash. Bracey's Utah is anguished and desperate as he crawls out from under a flipped 4X4, taking off his helmet and running, screaming "Get out of there!" with raw emotion. Lashed with rain, we move to a makeshift tent, out of the cold, to catch up with the two protagonists. "There's a point of reflection for Johnny and Bodhi," Ramírez muses of today's scene, "It's very intense." Bracey, face covered in fake blood, a coffee cup in one hand and a cigarette in the other, agrees. "This is a crucial scene we're filming, it's a heartbreaking scene for Utah and Bodhi, it's a culmination of where they've come to. Do their paths diverge, or do they come together?"



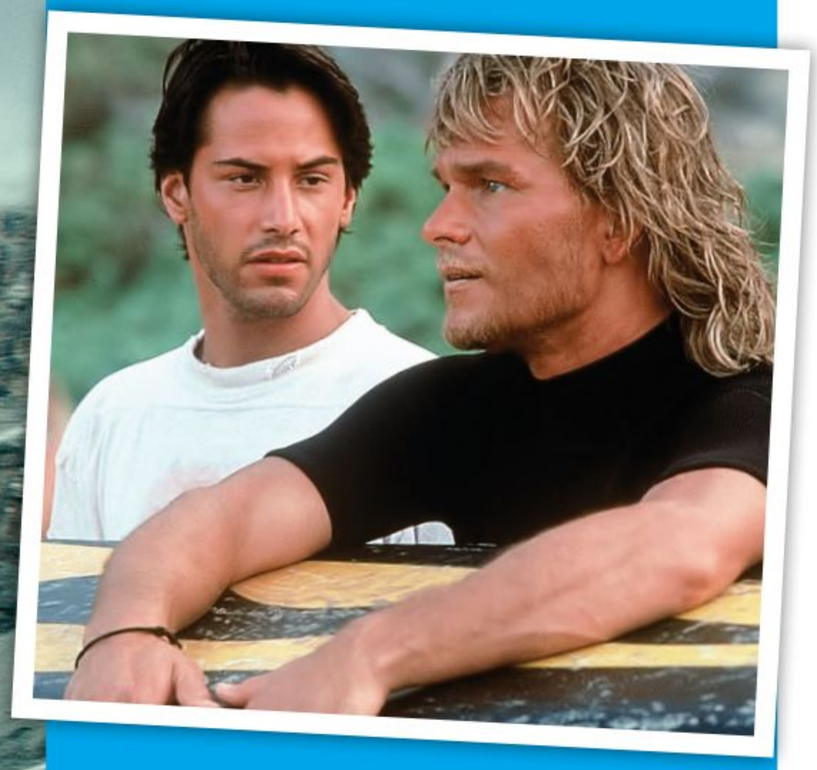


As fans of the original will recall, FBI hothead Utah ("young, dumb and full of cum" according to Gary Busey's craggy mentor, Pappas – now played by Ray Winstone) goes undercover as a wannabe surfer in order to infiltrate a board crew he believes to be robbing banks throughout LA. But his investigation is derailed as he grows closer to charismatic leader, Bodhi, and finds himself in too deep. In Bigelow's beloved version (discussed at length in *Hot Fuzz*) Utah and Bodhi's relationship is more brah-mance than bromance, a mystic adrenaline-junkie chasing the big 50-year storm vs a straight-shooter learning to relax amid eye-popping action.

In Core's re-set, the dynamic and tone feels more *The Dark Knight* than *Die Hard* – Bodhi is now a focused, kitted-out crusader. As it turns out, the director who earned his action spurs as DoP on the first *Fast And The Furious* ("It was

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A REAL BLUE FLAME SPECIAL

The Point Break team recall Keanu's finest film.



LUKE BRACEY

"I'm a huge fan of the original, I don't know how many times I've seen it. It's so beloved, especially by me. Johnny Utah's backstory in this is completely different to the first one. He's not a college football player, he knows how to snowboard, he knows how to motocross, he has surfed before. The original is such a great film so, for me, I wanted to pay my respects by updating it and bringing it to 2016."



ÉDGAR RAMÍREZ

"I watched *Point Break* when I was 13 years old and it had a huge impact on me. What Patrick Swazye did was beautiful, and it was unique. No one in this movie is trying to emulate what came before, what Keanu or what Patrick did in the past. The magic of *Point Break* is how these two human beings, these men complete each other by crossing paths, and what they can learn from one another."



TERESA PALMER

"I only just watched it for the first time. The night before we kicked off the film, we all got together and watched the original movie, the whole cast and crew. It was fantastic, it was such an amazing fun ride. I can understand why it's such a cult classic, why everyone is so enthralled by that film. I was excited to see it before I embarked on this journey."



RAY WINSTONE

"The first one is a really good film, I enjoyed it. But there's a lot more reality to this film. I don't really see the point of remakes, it's like making *Zulu* again: why? It's a great movie! But at the same time, a great story is a great story. I don't see this as a remake. I know the other film, I know the story, and I don't see this as a remake. It's a film that stands on its own. You'll agree when you see it."

PA



Dirtbike bandits: The boys don presidential disguises for a two-wheeled raid and (below) Utah takes aim.

more of a remake of *Point Break* than this is, frankly. *The Fast And The Furious* was *Point Break* in cars," he says), is a Nolan fan. "He's one of the great filmmakers of our time. He's been able to do things on a very large scale and have wonderful visuals, narrative, performances and also have commercial success, which is a rare combination. Doing things in camera is key for him, as it is for us." Which is why he had with Ericson, then we had dinner... It was like we were in love. It was immediate, I knew I had to do this movie."

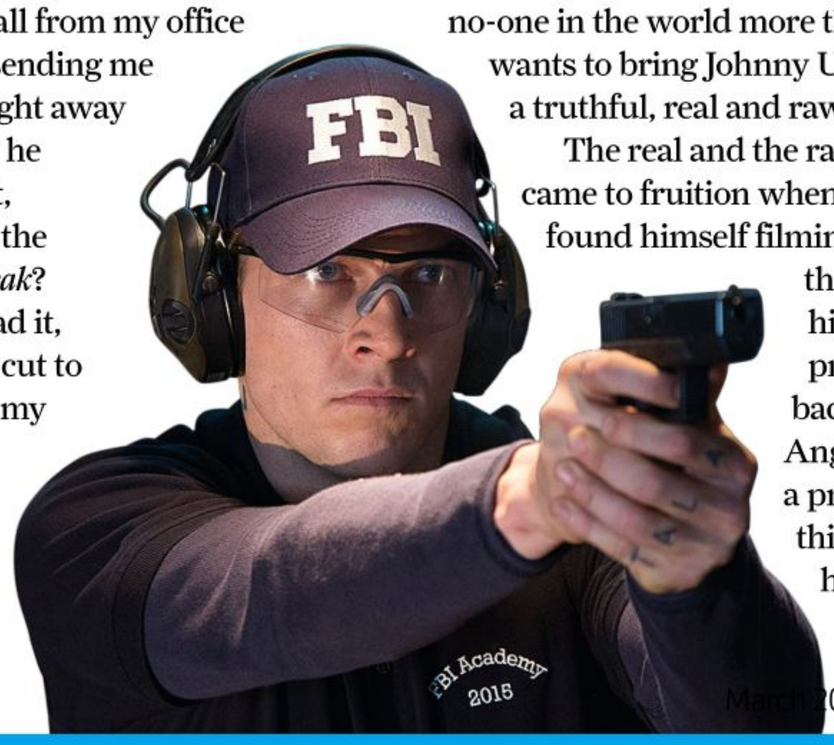
His new co-star was similarly stoked by the last-minute switcheroo. "I was excited to work with Gerry, but that's movies," says Bracey of Butler. "I don't really know what happened, but for me, Edgar is the right fit completely. He's brought real humanity to it with his down

'WE'RE GIVING IT ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT. I WANT TO BRING JOHNNY UTAH TO LIFE IN A TRUTHFUL, REAL AND RAW MANNER' LUKE BRACEY

Ramírez dangle off the edge of Venezuela's towering Angel Falls for real...

It had been an aspect the Venezuelan actor had been attracted to when he first read the script – after Gerard Butler pulled out citing scheduling conflicts. "I got a call from my office in LA, telling me that they're sending me a script and I need to read it right away because it's moving very fast," he recalls. "I asked about the part, and they said 'You'll see.' I got the script, and I was like '*Point Break*? Really? With this accent?' I read it, and suddenly there's a smash-cut to Angel Falls in Venezuela, and my jaw dropped. If I needed any sign that I needed to do *Point Break*, it was that Venezuela was featured. I had coffee to earth nature." And the two men matched each other in their drive to go the extra action mile. "We're giving it absolutely everything we've got," Bracey stresses. "I want to be so truthful to it, and make the best version I can. There's no-one in the world more than me who wants to bring Johnny Utah to life in a truthful, real and raw manner."

The real and the raw certainly came to fruition when Ramírez found himself filming the scene that had sold him on the project, falling backwards over Angel Falls. "It's a pretty terrifying thing to be at that height," admits >>



Core. "Édgar was on the edge of a balcony overlooking Angel Falls, literally 3200ft off the ground, in a very remote place. Ultimately, Édgar has to completely let go, to go backwards over the waterfall. He had to have that emotional feeling of letting himself go completely. It was a raw moment, it was powerful. After we photographed it, he unroped, came over to me and was sobbing. I held him at the top of the falls for a good five, 10 minutes. That's the kind of experiences we all went through. Édgar's fear was real, and it added to the scene in a way you don't normally find."

The story contains the sort of male-bonding that the original *Point Break* made iconic. "Men have a hard time connecting on a deep level," says Core, warming to his subject. "Bodhi is a serious person with serious convictions and ideologies. Utah is a person who has been broken in his own ways. There is a need for emotional connection between them. Whether you categorise that as a bromance or not, that's for the individual [*to decide*]. But men connecting with each other on a deeper truth is a fantastic thing, and if that comes across on this film, I welcome it."



Suited up: Johnny Utah (Luke Bracey) and Bodhi (Édgar Ramírez) celebrate a successful flight and, below, Utah is on the case.

'IT'S A HUGE PRIVILEGE TO TRY TO RECREATE NOT ONLY THE FORM, BUT THE STATE OF MIND THESE ATHLETES PUT THEMSELF INTO TO ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE' ÉDGAR RAMÍREZ

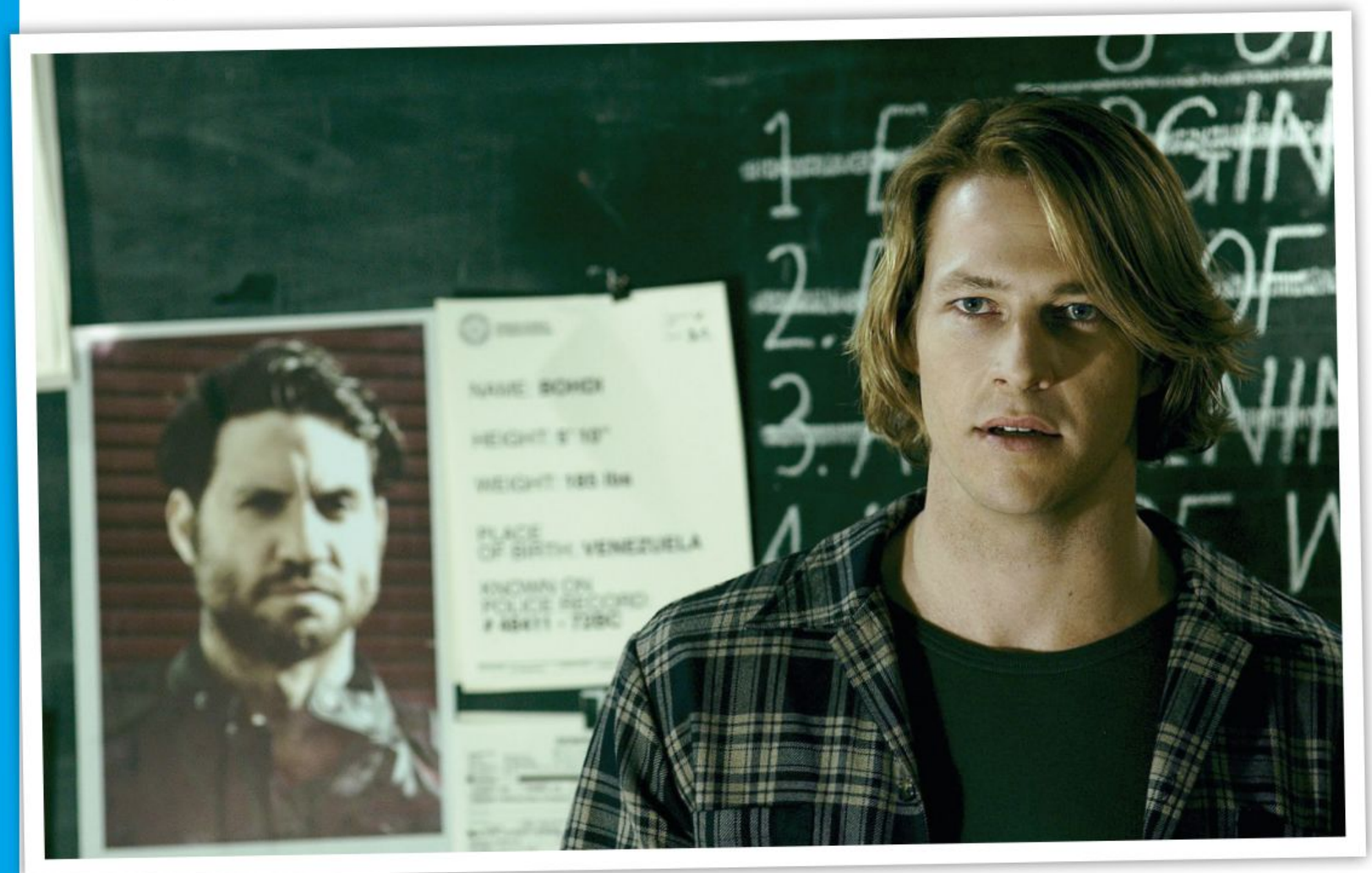
Angel Falls wasn't the only stunt to test Ramírez and Bracey during a gruelling shoot. "We shot in 11 countries, and we probably have 11 of those type of sequences," smiles Core. "Huge stunts, done in real places with real people, in camera. We have a multitude of stunts done in reality." The sequences – including riding monster waves, free climbing vertiginous cliffs, dirt biking mountain peaks and wingsuit-flying down narrow Alps gorges (and even underground) – were so daring that Core amassed the world's most talented extreme sport pros to pull off the stunts. Big wave daredevil Laird Hamilton [*see p88*], free climber Chris Sharma and wingsuit flyer Jeb Corliss all came on board to make the action look breathtakingly real.

Limits were pushed, mainly because the cast insisted on doing as many of the pulse-spiking stunts as they could get away with... and even some they couldn't. "We came as close as was safe for us, and we pushed it a little further than that," Ramírez says with a rueful grin. "We were in very remote locations, and insurance people and studio people weren't around. So we got away with a lot because it was very far away. I learned how to surf in one of the biggest swells of the century, the one we got in Teahupo'o in Tahiti. I remember shooting one sequence, praying not to see sharks all around me. It was really incredible to be there. It was a life experience."

Some life experiences can quickly shift to life endangering, however. *Point Break* is stuffed with scenes that contained real risk, even for the experts. When it was time to shoot those sequences, the extreme sports athletes didn't just replace the cast: they became cameramen.

Boardercross world champion (and Luke Bracey stand-in) Xavier De La Rue explains. "We shot a lot on Mont Blanc, which is in the middle of glaciers, and a lot of them are above 4,000 metres on ridges that are super sharp. We had to do a full sequence that was completely scripted, which included us riding together four at the same time, in really challenging conditions, where it would be hard enough to keep it together on your own. We originally had cameramen who were supposed to follow us, but it didn't work, so we had to adapt. I had to take the camera."

"Xavier is the top big mountain snowboarder in the world, so trying to keep up with him is nothing short of a miracle, and trying to get a camera to do that – and still be authentic – is impossible," Core tells *TF*. "People couldn't keep up with the steepness of it, and do it in a safe way. Ultimately, Xavier not only did the stunt work for Luke, he ended up grabbing the camera and operating it, because only he could do many of the things that are seen in the film.



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Carving a niche: Bracey and Ramírez were coached by top pro surfers and (right) Ray Winstone as Utah's mentor Angelo Pappas.



It's an honour. People are going to see the vision of one of the greatest."

Translating that vision was also a source of pride for Ramírez. "It is a huge privilege to try to recreate not only the form, but the state of mind these athletes put themselves into to achieve the impossible," Ramírez explains, awe in his eyes. "They're pushing the boundaries in each field, so they're poets in my opinion. And they helped us all the time. At the top of Mont Blanc, even if you needed to pee someone needed to go with you, because you could slide at any minute. Just walking on set was dangerous."

On *TF*'s set visit, the weather is the only thing that has to be contended with – but it certainly feels pretty real when a gust of wind momentarily brings the rainstorm into our tent. It's an element that ties to the movie, according to Ramírez. His updated Bodhi is now a Robin Hood-esque vigilante, trying to disrupt corporations, redistribute wealth and highlight ecological issues. "It's a contemporary subject. The fact that we're trapped in this tent freezing to death in the middle of summer gives a hint of how intrinsically connected this film is to what we're living right now. Anyone who thinks global warming is an invention should come to this set and see what's going on right now; it's not the first time we've found this kind of weather contradiction while making this movie. It was a great creative choice to allocate these characters within the reality of environmental activism. Whether it's terrorism or not is a matter of perspective. Are you defined by your actions, or your motivations? Ultimately, the audience will have their own answer."

Perhaps, but isn't that moving this version too far away from the original, where much of the attraction – for both Utah and audiences – was Bodhi's freewheeling pursuit of escapism and the ultimate ride? He didn't have a world view or a specific mission, merely the hunger for his next high and hope of sticking it to The Man. "It's a movie about free will," Ramírez insists. "It's about breaking conventions, about celebrating the possibility of being free, but also about responsibility and the consequences of your choices. How to break out of systems, of restrictions. That was what was appealing about the first one, and hopefully it'll be the same here. We're trying to keep the same subversive spirit of the first one, the rebellious spirit, but we're definitely adapting it to current times." TF

***Point Break* opens on 12 February.**

THE ACTION ISSUE

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



Just swell: Laird Hamilton rides a Teahupo'o barrel in 2001.

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Meet the real-life Bodhi, monster wave surfer and advisor to both Point Break movies, **Laird Hamilton** – a man who knows about chasing the ultimate ride.

WORDS **JANE CROWTHER**



Learning lines: Hamilton gives Luke Bracey a tow.

Laird Hamilton is calling *Total Film* from his ocean-view home on the island of Kaua'i in Hawai'i and even though he's pulling press duties to discuss his role as Surfing Technical Advisor on the re-tool of Kathryn Bigelow's beloved *Point Break*, he's got an eye on the waves. "I'm looking at the sky and I'm hoping I can get in the ocean today," he wistfully admits. Spoken like the true surf legend he is. During a three-decade career, 51-year-old Hamilton has conquered some of the world's biggest (80ft and counting) and most dangerous waves; and pioneered the concept of 'tow-ins' (riding a ski-line behind a jetski) to get to previously impossible breaks.

So merman is Hamilton that he was Kevin Costner's stunt double on *Waterworld* and provided the impressive boardwork during the pre-title sequence of *Die Another Day*, but it was 1991's *Point Break* that really intrigued him and opened the surfing world to a mainstream audience. A friend of Vince Klyn (Warchild), Hamilton and fellow big-wave surfer Darrick Doerner were drafted in to double for Patrick Swayze during the final '50-year storm' sequence. "On the first [*take*], when [*Doerner*] did the first crash, the cameraman didn't get it," Hamilton recalls of the scene set in Australia but filmed in Oregon. "We don't crash on purpose in surfing. It's bad enough when you crash by accident. I just told him, 'Tell them you're not doing it again unless they pay you double'. [*laughs*] They paid him."

Hamilton liked and respected the finished film ("surfers really liked the way they were depicted because it was more of an honourable thing, instead of *Fast Times At Ridgemont High* where surfers are a bunch of dingbats that smoke pot and definitely aren't athletes") so confesses to having reservations when director Ericson Core approached him to help on the remake and also cameo in it. "My concern was, yeah, what's their approach? If I'm going to be in it, I'll be myself." Sold on Core's verve and appetite to better the original film's surf scenes, Hamilton consulted on the best waves and helped leads Luke Bracey and Édgar Ramírez train to ensure Johnny Utah and Bodhi's first wave-riding meeting would be eye-popping. Moving the whole crew to a legendary and lethal reef break – Teahupo'o in Tahiti – Hamilton towed in the stars' doubles – big-wave champions Dylan Longbottom, Bruce Irons and Laurie Towner – to catch the moment two surfers ride the 'tube'.

"That's just something that just does not happen. I don't think we've had anybody really cross over each other at that wave, in all the time I can remember. Teahupo'o kills people. I rode a real famous wave there in 2000. The month before I rode that wave, a kid was killed out there. People have been paralysed at that place when it was 3ft high. This is a ferocious wave that breaks on a curve that's all live coral so pretty much every time you touch the bottom you're cut up, and you'll probably get stabbed too. It's like crashing on a motorbike in just your underwear!"

But the risk is worth the rush. Taking on a big wave, says Hamilton, is "something that demands your entire organism. Everything has to participate. You feel it in every part of your body. To be inside of a wave like that, and in that tube, to fly along in that and come out... You can mark that down in the couple of greatest things you've done in your life. When you can connect with [*nature*], and participate in an activity harmoniously with it, it's hard to identify any other situation on earth that really is more pure in its essence than that."

Very Bodhi... So does Hamilton think surf guru Bodhi would have really wiped out in the 50-year storm? When *TF* interviewed Swayze years ago he maintained that the character would definitely have got away. "Absolutely," insists Hamilton. "If you're calculated enough to wait for this [*storm*] and be there and be ready for it, that's not when [*dying is*] going to happen. It's going to happen when you're off your guard and you're reckless. So yes, what's to say that the original Bodhi's spirit isn't still out there alive?" Clearly he is... TF

THE ACTION ISSUE

THE 33 UNLIKELIEST ACTION HEROES

We all dream of being as tough and capable as the pumped-up action icons who rampage across our screens. Well, here are 33 'normal' actors who muscled aside Arnie and Sly to get in on the action…

WORDS PAUL BRADSHAW, ROSIE FLETCHER, JORDAN FARLEY, MATT GLASBY, JAMIE GRAHAM, KEVIN HARLEY, SIMON KINNEAR, MATT MAYTUM, NEIL SMITH, JOSH WINNING



01 KURT RUSSELL
ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, 1981

ORIGIN STORY First seen on the big screen kicking Elvis Presley's shins, Kurt spent his formative years starring in wholesome Disney offerings like *The Barefoot Executive* and *The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes*.

ACTION STATION Having cast him in his 1979 *Elvis* TV movie, John Carpenter fought to give Russell his career-revolutionising role: "Snake" Plissken, an authority-baiting, eyepatch-sporting soldier-cum-robber turned reluctant presidential saviour. The actor knew he'd nailed the part when he unwittingly freaked out some local hardnuts while filming in St Louis. Many rugged action heroes followed.

MUSCLE MEMORY His gladiatorial mano a mano with burly bruiser Slag (Ox Baker).

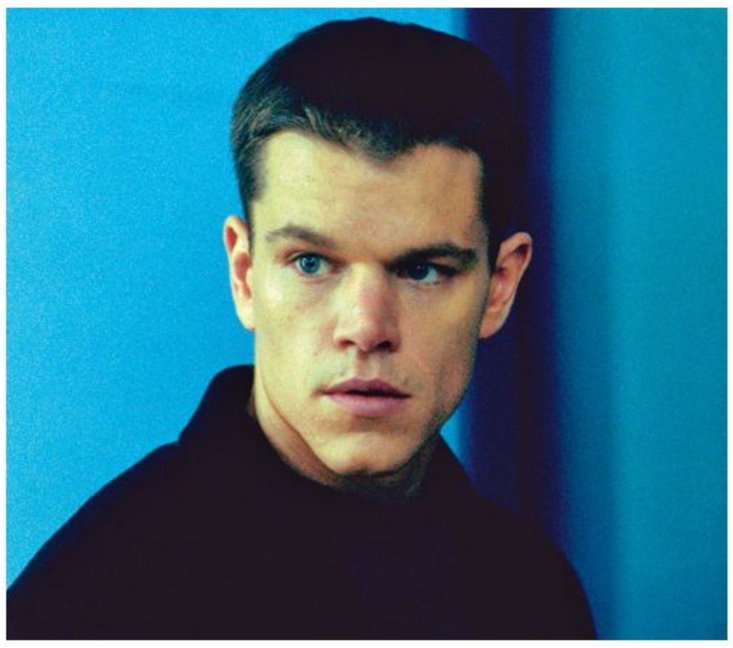


02 HUGH JACKMAN
X-MEN, 2000

ORIGIN STORY Before donning Wolverine's iconic mutton-chops, Jackman had appeared in some Aussie TV and little-seen features, but he drew wider acclaim for his all singing, all dancing, Olivier award-nominated turn in *Oklahoma!* at the National.

ACTION STATION Wolverine was a career-redefiner for Jackman when he stepped in as a last-minute replacement for a departing Dougray Scott. Taller than the comic's classically squat character, his height was played down with canny camera angles. Jackman studied Mike Tyson's early brawls to get into character, and he's packed on ever more muscle for each instalment.

MUSCLE MEMORY His first 'snikt' made it clear he was the perfect Wolvie.



03 MATT DAMON
THE BOURNE IDENTITY, 2002

ORIGIN STORY Sensitive, Oscar-winning screenwriter and star of *Good Will Hunting*, Damon unveiled creepy depths as *The Talented Mr Ripley*, and in terms of career choices, he was the thoughtful nerd to Ben Affleck's action-seeking jock.

ACTION STATION Shaking up his image (and the spy genre to boot), Damon studied a combination of martial arts Filipino Kali and Jeet Kune Do to play the highly trained amnesiac. "I'd wake up and do an hour-and-a-half of boxing and then an hour-and-a-half of martial arts," he says of the routine.

MUSCLE MEMORY Bourne's resourceful use of a magazine during hand-to-hand combat in 2004's *The Bourne Supremacy*.



04 PAUL RUDD
ANT-MAN, 2015

ORIGIN STORY The archetypal schlub next door, Rudd first came to prominence as the likeable love interest in *Clueless*, before cementing his charming everyguy status in comedies like *Knocked Up* and *I Love You, Man*.

ACTION STATION Rudd underwent a full body transformation for *Ant-Man*, developing the obligatory Marvel six-pack for his supersuit (so much so that his costume had to be softened). "I knew I was going to be held accountable for it, so I embraced that side of it," shrugs Rudd. "And I really enjoyed having that kind of focus."

MUSCLE MEMORY Proving his sense of humour had survived the training while sparring with Evangeline Lilly.



05 TAKESHI KITANO
VIOLENT COP, 1989

ORIGIN STORY As a fast-firing stand-up and TV talk-show host, Takeshi Kitano was an edgy provocateur and prankster. But he was more mischievous than macho: think Harry Hill, not Dirty Harry.

ACTION STATION After the original helmer departed, Kitano stepped in and made *Violent Cop* his own. Directing himself as a policeman with a flair for interrogative sadism, Kitano aced the comedy/cruelty transition seamlessly: "Humour is like violence," he explained. "They both come to you unexpectedly." A career in poker-faced crime pics seemed inevitable.

MUSCLE MEMORY Home visit: brutally forcing a teen hoodlum's confession in his bedroom.



06 MERYL STREEP
THE RIVER WILD, 1994

ORIGIN STORY By the mid '90s Streep was already the running joke of the Academy Awards – with a whopping seven nominations and two wins cementing her dusty reputation as The Greatest Thespian Of Her Generation.

ACTION STATION Bringing method to Curtis Hanson's white-knuckle, white-water madness, Streep got so exhausted that she begged for a break from rafting. When Hanson refused, she collapsed overboard. "If I say I'm too tired to do something," she said, dragging herself out the rapids, "we have to assume I'm telling the truth".

MUSCLE MEMORY Taking out Kevin Bacon's armed robber with words, wit *and* a bullet to the head.



07 CHRIS PRATT
ZERO DARK THIRTY, 2012

ORIGIN STORY Before A-list stardom beckoned, Pratt was best known as superior sitcom *Parks And Recreation*'s dimwitted Andy Dwyer: cuddly, greasy, goofy.

ACTION STATION After dropping weight and revealing dramatic chops as well as cheekbones for 2011's *Moneyball*, Pratt went even further for a support role in *Zero Dark Thirty*, dropping 50lbs over six months ("I worked out really hard and I cut out everything bad for me for a long time"). But it was as Star-Lord in *Guardians Of The Galaxy* that he emerged as a world-beating action star.

MUSCLE MEMORY His shirtless jail initiation in *Guardians Of The Galaxy*.



08 DEMI MOORE
G.I. JANE, 1997

ORIGIN STORY An ex-soap star turned high-living Brat Packer, Moore scored stardom in saucy pottery weepie *Ghost* and got objectified in *Indecent Proposal*. Hardly screams uber-ripped military bad-ass, does it?

ACTION STATION But Ridley Scott thought otherwise and Moore rewarded him with a transformation into Navy SEAL shape. The buzz-cut? Small beans. Pushed by trainer Gregory Joujon-Roche and SEAL instructor Stephen Helvenston, Moore woke at 4am daily for three-to-four-hour workouts. "Demi did it all for real," said stunt boss Phil Neilson.

MUSCLE MEMORY "Suck my dick!" Busting Viggo Mortensen's conk'n'balls in a ruckus.



09 BUSTER KEATON
THE GENERAL, 1926

ORIGIN STORY You wouldn't think it to look at him – whippet-thin, stone-faced, a perpetual victim of life's travails – but action was always in Buster's blood from his childhood in a family vaudeville act.

ACTION STATION Earlier films dabbled in danger (Keaton broke his neck filming *Sherlock, Jr.* in 1924) but *The General* is an epic among silent comedies. Buster plays Confederate wannabe Johnnie Gray, turned down for active service until Yankees steal both his paramour and his prized locomotive. Cue cinema's ultimate railway chase, with Keaton performing every stupefying stunt on a moving train.

MUSCLE MEMORY Keaton narrowly dodges a cannonball to the face only because the track turns a corner. >>

KOBAL



10 MICHAEL KEATON BATMAN, 1989

ORIGIN STORY He'd given good after-hours morgue man in *Night Shift* and excellent putrefied joker in *Beetlejuice*, but could the man doing the laundry in *Mr. Mom* growl "I'm Batman"? As if.

ACTION STATION "That could really have gone south," Keaton admitted of Tim Burton's casting choice: Warner Bros received thousands of protest letters. But he brought an edgy duality to bear, playing goofy to cover up Bruce Wayne's dark real identity as a vengeful nocturnal scourge of Gotham's street scum.

MUSCLE MEMORY "Tell all your friends..." Pulverising goons into remembering the name.



11 DAN STEVENS THE GUEST, 2014

ORIGIN STORY Best known as likeable *Downton* toff Matthew Crawley, Stevens seemed destined for a lifetime of stiff upper lipped Austen adaptations when he left the show.

ACTION STATION Stevens surprised *everyone* as kickass military killbot David Collins in American thriller *The Guest*. Training four hours a day for months to get battle-ready ("My wife was very happy,"), he also learned "how to handle a Glock and take guns apart". Next up, James Bond?

MUSCLE MEMORY Collins exits the shower, sixpack rippling. Diet Coke break!



12 UMA THURMAN KILL BILL VOL. 1, 2003

ORIGIN STORY Quentin Tarantino made her an icon with *Pulp Fiction* (1994), but Thurman stuck mostly to dramatic roles before and after that, including *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988) and *Gattaca* (1997).

ACTION STATION Offered the script as a 30th birthday present from Tarantino, Thurman was integral to getting *Kill Bill* made. She came up with the opening shot (The Bride bloodied on the church floor) and "trained five days a week for three months from nine in the morning until five o'clock at night" for the film. "It was a big reach," she admits.

MUSCLE MEMORY The Bride slays the competition as she slices and dices the Crazy 88.



13 DANIEL CRAIG CASINO ROYALE, 2006

ORIGIN STORY Pre-Bond, Craig was best known for tortured artists (*Sylvia*) and posh totty (*Layer Cake*). "When I first got approached, I just thought: 'you've made a mistake'," he admitted.

ACTION STATION Inspired by *Munich*'s Mossad advisors, Craig played Bond as a stone-cold killing machine, buffing up his body to match. "Even now, I still can't believe the physical changes he achieved," marvelled trainer Simon Waterson. Neither could viewers: here was Ian Fleming's "blunt instrument" made flesh.

MUSCLE MEMORY Bond emerges suavely from the sea – the complete package.



16 JONAH HILL 21 JUMP STREET, 2012

ORIGIN STORY Former 'Angry Nerd' most famous for Judd Apatow comedies who even in his more serious roles (*Cyrus*, *Moneyball* – for which he was Oscar-nommed) tended to play chubby schlubs or brainy outsiders.

ACTION STATION Hill dropped 40 pounds for the role of Schmidt, a failing cop banished back to high school for an undercover mission; once there, he discovers that geeks are suddenly cool. The same happened for Hill. As well as running and gunning Hill took on stunts and even became an unlikely heart throb.

MUSCLE MEMORY The failed attempt at 'car surfing' – hilarious and painful-looking.

14 SAOIRSE RONAN HANNA, 2011

ORIGIN STORY An unlikely action hero by virtue of being a small blonde 15-year-old girl, her previous breakout roles had been in dramas (*Atonement*, *The Lovely Bones*), playing, unsurprisingly, small girls.

ACTION STATION Hanna's a highly skilled assassin in Joe Wright's thriller and Ronan did all her own stunts, training for four hours a day for two months with a protégé of Bruce Lee. Ronan went on to play another killer in *Violet & Daisy*, then a vampire in *Byzantium* – as deadly as she is angelic.

MUSCLE MEMORY Hanna offs a room full of soldiers, nicks a handgun and escapes into a vent.



15 MICHAEL CERA SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD, 2010

ORIGIN STORY Canadian softie Michael Cera rose to prominence playing wet towels in everything from *Juno* to *Superbad*. Even *Youth In Revolt*'s uber-cool François Dillinger made a joke of Cera's wimpy screen persona.

ACTION STATION Cera turned slacker action hero for Edgar Wright's cult comic adaptation *Scott Pilgrim*. The actor trained with Jackie Chan's fight school every morning for two months, earning the (hopefully not ironic) nickname "Mikey the Push-Up King" in the process. Not only does he get the girl, he kicks major butt on the way.

MUSCLE MEMORY Cera nuts former Supes Brandon Routh.



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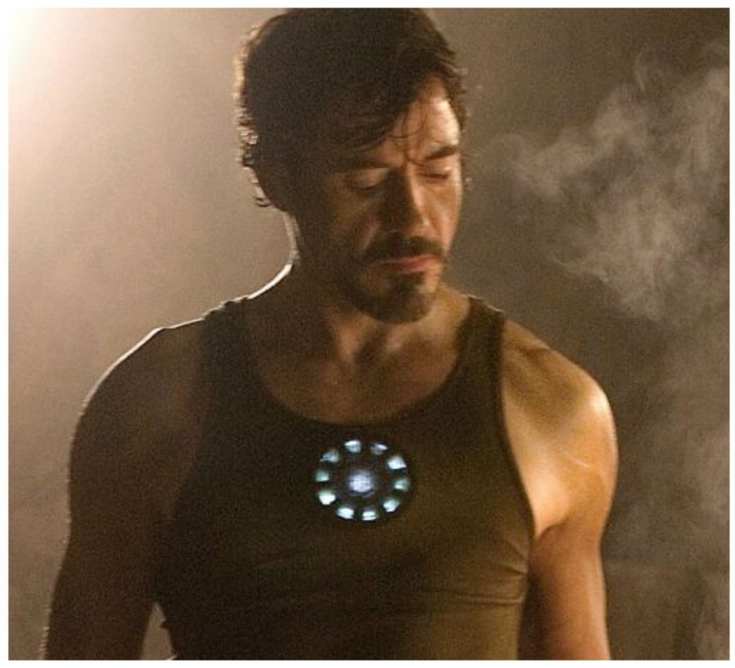


17 LINDA HAMILTON
TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY, 1991

ORIGIN STORY Before shooting *The Terminator* (1984), in which she plays Sarah Connor, a whiny, bouffant-haired waitress with a weakness for soldiers, the actress sprained her ankle. As Hamilton later commented: "She's mincemeat!"

ACTION STATION The Sarah Connor of *T2* is one tough mudder. Across months of hard training, from Israeli commando Uzi Gal, Hamilton learnt how to "load clips, change mags, check out a room upon entry, [*and*] verify kills", concluding: "After *T2*, I don't think anything can hurt me."

MUSCLE MEMORY Sarah breaks out of the mental hospital swinging a symbolic truncheon.



18 ROBERT DOWNEY JR
IRON MAN, 2008

ORIGIN STORY The last thing anyone expected from the man who played Chaplin was action movie mega-stardom. Downey Jr's troubles with drug addiction hardly screamed "family friendly blockbuster" material as well.

ACTION STATION Downey Jr consumed 5,000 calories a day and put on 25 pounds of muscle to play Tony Stark. Though the suit does most of the heavy lifting the genius billionaire playboy philanthropist had to look capable without the help of technological tin cans, and trained using the Wing Chun technique made famous by Bruce Lee.

MUSCLE MEMORY Building the Mark 1 suit out of scraps and busting out of terrorist captivity.

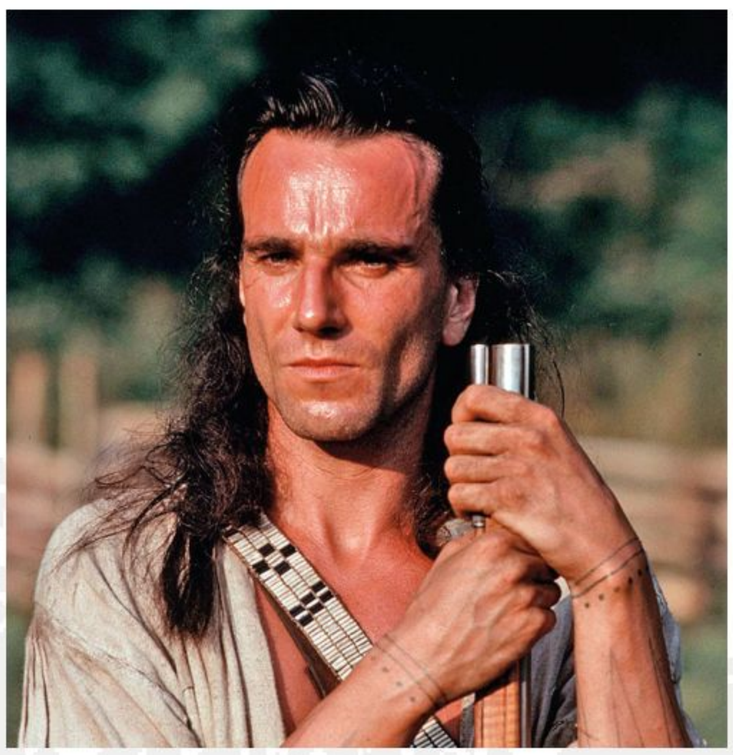
19 KEANU REEVES
SPEED, 1994

ORIGIN STORY As one half of *Bill & Ted*, Keanu Reeves found fame playing air guitar opposite Alex Winter and exclaiming "Like, woah!" every five seconds. Totally bodacious.

ACTION STATION *Point Break* (1991) saw him tackling thieving surfers, but *Speed* transformed Reeves into an action hero proper. Playing a SWAT officer aboard a runaway bus, he performed 90 per cent of his own stunts and took the role so seriously he even shaved off his famous floppy locks.

MUSCLE MEMORY Fighting Dennis Hopper on the roof of a racing Metro train.





20 DANIEL DAY-LEWIS
THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, 1992

ORIGIN STORY An Oscar-winner by the time he made *Mohicans*, Daniel Day-Lewis had made a name for himself with committed performances in sombre dramas *The Unbearable Lightness Of Being* (1988) and *My Left Foot* (1989).

ACTION STATION Ever the Method man, Day-Lewis prepared to play adopted Mohican Hawkeye by living off the land in Alabama, hunting and skinning animals in the wilderness. While filming, he avoided technology, travelled by canoe and even took his flintlock rifle to Christmas dinner. Result? He looks oh-so-authentic while running in slo-mo.

MUSCLE MEMORY Hawkeye and the Mohicans battle the Huron tribe.

KOBAL



21 SIMON PEGG
HOT FUZZ, 2007

ORIGIN STORY Though already on his way to action hero status with a role in *Mission: Impossible III*, and a deadly shootout in *Spaced* (albeit with finger guns), Pegg was still very much a comedy star in 2007.

ACTION STATION Pegg "trained hard, slimmed down, and didn't drink" in preparation for the role of big city cop Nick Angel. Amazingly, despite wielding enough guns to make Chuck Norris cower behind his mum, Pegg and Frost only spent a day in firearms training. Forget *Bad Boys*, they're *Natural Born Killers*.

MUSCLE MEMORY Tooling up and riding into the Battle for Sandford on horseback.

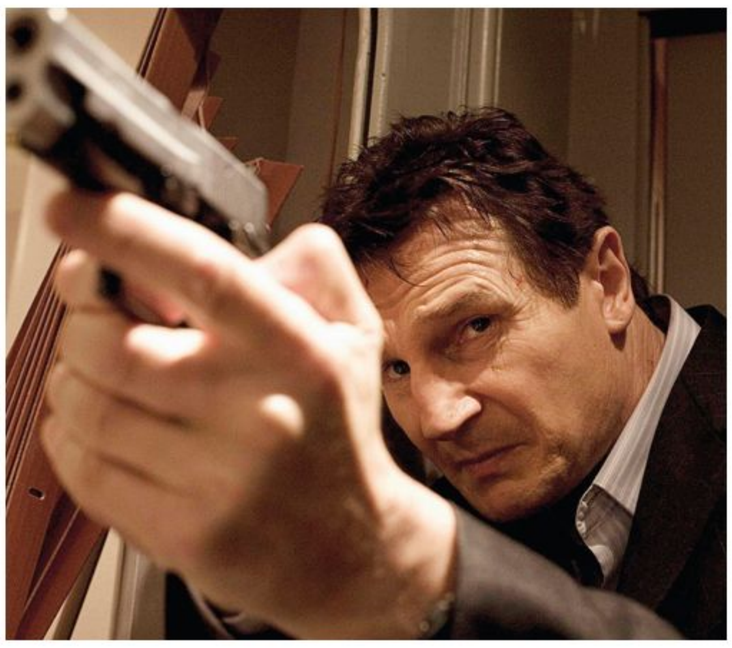


22 COLIN FIRTH
KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE, 2015

ORIGIN STORY English gent Colin Firth spent an entire career cultivating the kind of smooth talking persona that marked him out as a lover, not a fighter.

ACTION STATION With his best-known scrap a flailing-armed cat fight with Hugh Grant, Colin Firth was the last person anyone expected to ascend to action-hero status, which was exactly the point. Firth trained for three hours every day for six months, with director Matthew Vaughn adamant it had to be him, not a stuntman, performing the film's choreographed bursts of violence.

MUSCLE MEMORY Harry massacres an entire Kentucky hate group in a church. >>

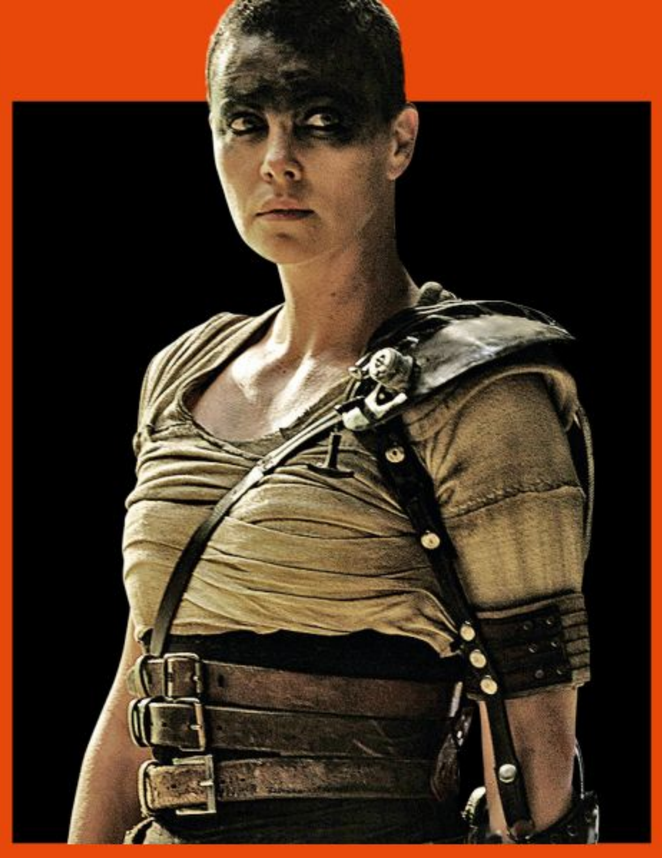


23 LIAM NEESON
TAKEN, 2008

ORIGIN STORY Spent 30 years playing towering sensitive types (*Schindler's List*, *Michael Collins*) before George Lucas handed him a lightsaber in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (1999).

ACTION STATION After his Henri Ducard trained up Bruce Wayne in *Batman Begins* (2005), Neeson took the lead in *Taken*, learning hybrid martial arts style Nagasu Do and weapon-handling skills from a former SAS soldier to play an ex-CIA operative. It heralded a new 'OAP' action era in the then 56-year-old's career. *The A-Team*, *The Grey*, *Unknown* and more followed.

MUSCLE MEMORY Taking out Albanian gangsters and torturing boss Marko (Arben Bajraktaraj).



24 CHARLIZE THERON
MAD MAX: FURY ROAD, 2015

ORIGIN STORY Played the good (*Mighty Joe Young*), the bad (*Young Adult*, *Snow White And The Huntsman*) and the ugly (*Monster*), with the latter nabbing her a Best Actress Oscar in 2004.

ACTION STATION She let Will Smith do the heavy lifting in *Hancock* (2008), so it was *Mad Max: Fury Road* that turned Theron into an action hero to die for, playing the truck-steering, one-armed Imperator Furiosa, who elbows the spotlight away from Max (literally; she broke Tom Hardy's nose) and will fight nasty if she has to.

MUSCLE MEMORY Finally, at long last, Furiosa kills Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne).



25 EMILY BLUNT
EDGE OF TOMORROW, 2014

ORIGIN STORY Though she hefted a firearm in *Looper* (2012) and outran killer agents in *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011), the majority of Blunt's work had been in period flicks (*The Young Victoria*) and romcoms (*The Devil Wears Prada*).

ACTION STATION Wielding an enormous sword as 'Full Metal Bitch' Sergeant Rita Rose Vrataski, Blunt not only did her own stunts for Doug Liman's futuristic actioner (even driving the mini-van, which she accidentally crashed), she even told Tom Cruise to "stop being such a wuss" about lugging around that 85lb exo-skeleton.

MUSCLE MEMORY Kicking serious alien booty during the opening, devastating beach siege.









26 GEENA DAVIS
THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT, 1996

ORIGIN STORY Followed up her debut role as a soap actress in *Tootsie* (1982) with alternately hilarious (*Beetlejuice*) and heartbreaking (*Thelma & Louise*) films that got plenty of attention but never bothered the action genre.

ACTION STATION Directed by husband Renny Harlin, Davis briefly became an action heroine in the forgettable *Cutthroat Island* (1996) and underrated *The Last Kiss Goodnight*, the latter revealing her staid housewife to be deadly CIA assassin Charly Baltimore. Cue water torture, gun fights, black eyeshadow and kamikaze car stunts.

MUSCLE MEMORY Charly takes on a moving truck in which her daughter is being held captive.

27 OWEN WILSON
NO ESCAPE, 2015

ORIGIN STORY As Hollywood's go-to funny guy, Wilson's forged a career playing laidback stoner-types. He's acted opposite Ben Stiller 13 times, reaching a comedy peak as dumb model Hansel in *Zoolander* (2001).

ACTION STATION "There were days when we were doing scenes that were so intense I didn't really feel like joking around," Wilson says of taking on his first hero role in *No Escape*, which says something about the hard graft he went through (running, sweating, taking up arms) as his Jack protects his family in war-torn Cambodia.

MUSCLE MEMORY A jaw-dropping rooftop sequence in which a helicopter opens fire on Jack and his family.

28 HELEN MIRREN
RED, 2010

ORIGIN STORY Shakespearean Dame with few foibles, Mirren carved out a varied career for herself in racy dramas (*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*), grey-pound goliaths (*Gosford Park*) and sentimental dramedies (*Calendar Girls*).

ACTION STATION Signing on to *RED* purely because she was a Bruce Willis fan, Mirren more than holds her own in this 'OAP' actioner as ex-CIA agent Victoria, pumping machine guns, delicately threatening anybody who gets on her bad side and, in one outrageous moment, using her purse as a weapon. *RED 2* followed.

MUSCLE MEMORY Victoria sets up stall in a car park, rattling off machine gun rounds.

29 NICOLAS CAGE
THE ROCK, 1996

ORIGIN STORY Tinseltown's wild child always kept things unpredictable, going from teen romcom (*Valley Girl*) to Oscar-bait drama (*Leaving Las Vegas*) via zany Cher vehicle (*Moonstruck*), but 'action hero' never seemed in his reach.

ACTION STATION Nabbing the role of FBI Agent Goodspeed from Arnold Schwarzenegger, Cage proved everybody wrong, racing cars, blowing shit up and shooting guns in the rain in what would be the first of his many action movies. "It was a definite choice on my part to do something unexpected," he told *TF* in 2005.

MUSCLE MEMORY Goodspeed's team infiltrates Alcatraz, only to be ambushed by Hummel's (Ed Harris) Marines.

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30 WILL SMITH
BAD BOYS, 1995

ORIGIN STORY Gangly and goofy in sitcom *The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air* (1990), Smith's biggest cinematic hit in the early '90s amounted to a cameo in Whoopi Goldberg/Ted Danson comedy *Made In America* (1993).

ACTION STATION Dedicating himself to becoming "the biggest movie star in the world", Smith struck gold with this Michael Bay action flick. Training with a special ops team, he brings A-list swagger to the role of Miami PD Mike Lowrey, particularly during dialogue scenes he improvised with co-star Martin Lawrence.

MUSCLE MEMORY The turbo-powered Porsche climax takes things to another level.



31 ANGELINA JOLIE
LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER, 2001

ORIGIN STORY Back when she was best known as Jon Voight's eccentric daughter, Jolie started out in pap like *Cyborg 2* (1993) before riveting in *Girl, Interrupted* (1999) and *The Bone Collector* (1999).

ACTION STATION Her casting as Brit heroine Lara Croft caused controversy, but Jolie's dedication was clear: she trained in yoga, kickboxing and weapons, and performed the bungee-ballet scene herself. "I liked the intense training because there is only one way to do something and, for me, it's in extremes," she said.

MUSCLE MEMORY Jolie twisted her ankle during the bungee-ballet sequence, but returned to complete it.



32 JESSE EISENBERG
AMERICAN ULTRA, 2015

ORIGIN STORY An actor of the indie mould, Eisenberg's geeky credentials had seen him playing nervous types in the likes of *The Squid And The Whale* (2005), *Adventureland* (2009) and *The Social Network* (2010).

ACTION STATION In something of a 180, *American Ultra* destroys Eisenberg's stoner persona as his Mike Howell is revealed as a sleeper agent for the CIA (think *The Long Kiss Goodnight* for slackers). Cue carnage-wreaking in a kitchen, a nightclub, and a supermarket. "Only from acting did I realise I have a lot of dormant anger," Eisenberg jokes.

MUSCLE MEMORY Howell uses a spoon to kill two operatives. Yes, a spoon.

KOBAL



33 SCARLETT JOHANSSON
IRON MAN 2, 2010

ORIGIN STORY She received Golden Globe and BAFTA noms for quality turns in *Girl With A Pearl Earring* and *Lost In Translation*, roles that typified her early arthouse career.

ACTION STATION Training for six weeks ahead of shooting *Iron Man 2*, and then throughout filming, Johansson learned Wushu, a Chinese fighting style, with stunt coordinator R.A. Rondell. "It's just a lot of failures until you get it right, but boy do those failures hurt sometimes!" she joked of tackling Black Widow's moves. Would later kick ass in Luc Besson's *Lucy*.

MUSCLE MEMORY Performing wily flip manoeuvres to fell Justin Hammer's team of guards. TF

GETTING SERIOUS

When action icons prove they can act...

SYLVESTER STALLONE COP LAND, 1997
Sly piled on the pounds and played deaf in one ear as a small-town sheriff (below) who roots out police corruption. Holds his own against De Niro, Keitel and Liotta.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
MAGGIE, 2015
Yes, it's a zombie film, but Arnie sprouted a grey beard and a perma-frown to watch his on-screen daughter slooowly die before his watery eyes.

JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME JCVD, 2008
The Muscles from Brussels played himself as a washed-up actor. Includes a six-minute to-camera monologue about his failed marriages and drug abuse.

BURT REYNOLDS BOOGIE NIGHTS, 1997
The muscular, moustachioed '70s icon was revived by PTA to play a porno patriarch with a big – wait for it – heart. Nominated for an Oscar.

SEAN CONNERY THE HILL, 1965
No one expected Mr Bond to give such a raw, punishing turn in a POW drama. Again teamed with director Sidney Lumet to investigate child abuse in *The Offence*.

My Life In Pictures

KEVIN COSTNER

Eliot Ness, Crash Davis, Lieutenant Dunbar, The Mariner... **Kevin Costner** has played numerous iconic all-American heroes. Now he's challenging audiences to root for him as a hard-drinking grandad embroiled in a racial custody battle for his mixed-race granddaughter in Black Or White. The self-confessed 'cowboy' talks TF through his impressive film resume to date.

WORDS JANE CROWTHER



BLACK OR WHITE (2014)

"*Black Or White* is as emblematic of my career as any movie I've ever done, because when no one would make it, I put my money up to make it. It's kind of how I run my whole career. If it was the last movie I ever made, I would be OK with that. I actually grew up in a community of Compton [*LA*]. Not my entire life, but the disparity between those two communities, Compton and, say, Beverly Hills, it's very disparate. This [*movie*] was just honest, I thought. This was a fight over how to protect this child, and two people [*Costner and Octavia Spencer*] very suspicious of each other that it could be done. Was it difficult to play a drunk? Yeah. I'm not really a drinker. I'm from the '60s – you can read out of that what you want! But yeah, it was important to play it, and to find the balance so it didn't distract. I've [*worked with child actors*] a lot. It can be highly successful. But really, what you need is the language that seems honest between a child and an adult. I felt that the language, before I even met the little girl, was really honest. So we didn't have to re-tailor our language once we found our little actress. What we needed to do was kind of relax and quit acting, in a way, and be as natural [*as possible*] with each other." >>

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KEVIN COSTNER

KOBAL



Career kickstart: locked and loaded in *The Untouchables*.



THE UNTOUCHABLES (1987)

"*The Untouchables* gave me a platform. I was in the ensemble as Eliot Ness, and I was kind of the lead character. But it was a pretty big ensemble when you think about it. I fit my part and Sean Connery fit his and De Niro and Andy [*Garcia*] and all the different ones. So I fit in, I think, well in that movie. In Hollywood, the second question is, 'Yeah, but can he really carry a movie?' I didn't really carry *The Untouchables*. There's always those who would have a more cynical eye, a critical eye, whatever you want to call it. 'OK, that was OK, but I'm not sure he can carry a movie with a woman' or whatever. Then *No Way Out* came very, very quickly. Whatever rumblings about my ability to either do that or not were completely extinguished."

NO WAY OUT (1987)

"I found *No Way Out* – it was called *Finished With Engines*, which is a naval term for shutting down a ship. I was always hoping they would keep that as a title, but they didn't. Because I was fairly unknown I was, right on the heels of that, cast as Eliot in *The Untouchables*. But [*Orion, who distributed* No Way Out] being smaller, and this being a movie that the company maybe didn't have as much money to promote, they let *The Untouchables* come out first. A base developed for me right there. Those who found *The Untouchables* interesting and were willing to maybe go see a movie with the same guy in it, they ran into *No Way Out* probably three months later. [*Being considered a sex symbol*] is a weird thing because you know in your heart that before fame, you know how you're looked at and received. I mean, I know I don't have two heads, but I know that without fame I never got a whole bunch of looks. If I'm in a room, I might be the fifth best looking guy in the room, at the bar, something like that – if you try to figure out how to handicap that or rate that. I always felt really confident, but I never felt I was absolutely at the centre of attention or needed to be."



Ship shape: as naval officer Tom Farrell in *No Way Out*.

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BULL DURHAM (1988)

"People talk about chemistry all the time. Sometimes when you have chemistry, I think it's your willingness to touch. When you're comfortable around somebody, you can put your arm around them, give them a poke on the shoulder. You can touch their head. You do it without thinking. Sometimes, with certain actors, that is there. There's something about physicality that I think chemistry brings alive. I felt all along, with [*Susan*] Sarandon, there was an ease of that.

"I was able to build my career on movies that were almost all [*budgeted at*] less than $10m. Not on giant movies, not on big sequels. If you think about *Bull Durham*, if you think about *Field Of Dreams*, these are movies that are really not very expensive movies. No one wanted to make *Bull Durham*. At one point, a guy said, 'I'll make it, but I'm only going to put in $4m'. 'We need at least six...' And that's what we made it with. I've made three baseball movies [Bull Durham, Field Of Dreams *and* For The Love Of The Game]. But the good news is: not the same one. They're all different."



Riding tall: exploring American history in *Dances With Wolves* and (above) with Susan Sarandon in *Bull Durham*.

DANCES WITH WOLVES (1990)

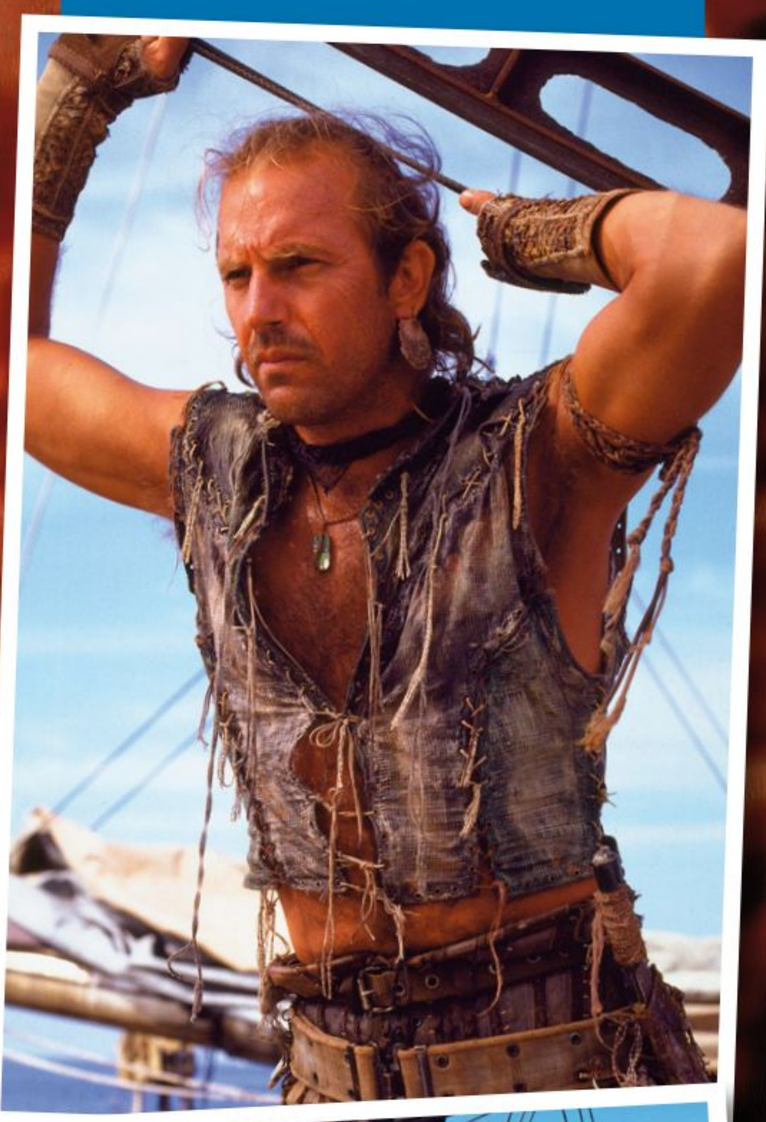
"*Dances* was $16m, and no one wanted to make that movie. The idea that I could do anything I want was only inside me. It wasn't that I could, but if you're willing to say 'no' enough, what happens is you also have to live with the outcome of saying 'no' – which is sometimes that it's not going to get made. I had a pretty strong force of will about what I would do. But it didn't make anything automatic. I didn't know that *Dances* would work. I believed it worked because of the writing – I'm very writer-oriented. What I don't do is I don't second guess what I think is good. I also don't fall out of love with what I think is good. I don't do it because I think it's a valentine, that only I'm going to get. Or a piece of art that only my mom is going to put on the refrigerator – you know, 'it's not very good, but here it is'. People think of *Dances* as a more gentle movie, when it was actually very violent when you got into it. But you get to the end of the movie and the level of understanding is that there is a sense of poetry there. I think there's a big difference between *Dances* and *The Revenant*, but I think the colonisation, the way North America was taken over, the conflict – *The Revenant* will highlight that. There's always going to be room for the American experience." >>

KOBAL

On fire: *Robin Hood* was a big hit while (below right) *Waterworld* was more coolly received.

WATERWORLD (1995)

"The fans have talked about it ever since I made it, around the world. For whatever reason, people think that it didn't make money. I don't know why the message that it *did* make money – and a lot of money – didn't cut through. But I know that we worked hard on that movie every day to make it really original. We didn't have all the greenscreen that they do now. I was doing a lot of those stunts. That's me up there flying around. I mean, I almost died on that movie five times. There's holes in it, but there's holes in almost any movie you see. But overall, it's really a feast for those who love action and that world. It hasn't always been appreciated by those who've seen it – not so much by the journalists that decided something and kept on to it. But if you show that to your children, they love it. It's really, really a beloved movie around the world, quite honestly. And it didn't put me off water, no!"





ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES (1991)

"When people come up to me, the biggest joy I have is that I don't know what [*movie is*] going to come out of their mouth. *Robin Hood* comes up with a lot of young people – I don't know why. On *Robin Hood* I froze. You know that big fight with Little John was three days in that cold river up there in Yorkshire? I got that river's beauty right away, and then I got to hate it like vegetables when I got into it! We decided when we had to fight, it wasn't going to stay still. It was literally going to be down that river. But it was such a fun romp. Alan Rickman said, 'Oh God, another American who really likes to fight' when we were going to do our action scenes! I have fond memories of filming in England. I am very American. Let's face it, I am a bit of a cowboy. I am a bit of a jock. As I went to Europe, a lot of things in my mind began to change about stuff. Just seeing stuff that was important and timeless."

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Hold 'em: taking a break in *Open Range*.



COSTNER

OPEN RANGE (2003)

"I like movies that have an international appeal, but I do like American history. I do like taking people back and taking that journey, because it was so difficult for our ancestors. It was so difficult for the Europeans who were coming over here because it was wild. It was like the Garden of Eden. There was no law here for 300 years. There was no building like there was in England. Those places were like Mars. Even the countryside in England belonged to the King. You couldn't even hunt his deer. Over here, you could say, 'Fuck you. I do anything I want. And I will.' We have a violent, bloody past and I like talking about it and I like filming it. Because what happens is, when you film it really correctly, if you're sitting in the audience and watching it, you're going to think, 'Jesus Christ, could I have done that?' Because that's what they had to do."



Superdad: as Jonathan Kent in *Man Of Steel*.

KOBAL

MAN OF STEEL (2013)

"I turned *Jack Ryan* down like three times, four times. I wasn't going to do it. But finally, Kenneth [*Branagh*] called me. And I've always admired Kenneth and his career and his ability. It was a part I thought a lot of people could play. But because he called me – because he took a personal interest, I went and did it. I did not do it to stay relevant. I did not do it for any other reason. Superman – I don't know anything about cartoons, so to speak. For me, that was two days of work. Zack Snyder came to me on that. I wasn't looking to prop myself up there at that moment, by any stretch. Again, it was someone that I like who said, 'Could you come do this for me? It's going to be a couple of days. It'd mean a lot to me.' Those are important words to me. Someone with respect means a lot to me. But it wasn't by design to stay relevant. I don't actually think that way. I just do different things because they feel important to me at the time. I don't do it for money, and I don't do it for fame. I've had more than my fair share. I do it because I love to do it. I'd like to direct more. People ask me to do it. All I know is that I can do the work that I do." TF

***Black Or White* is out now on Digital HD and on DVD.**

$O M

ONEY

Crazy Stupid Love's co-stars reunite alongside Christian Bale in a financial crash drama by Anchorman's director. What? Ryan Gosling and Steve Carell talk wigs and why **The Big Short** is gunning for gold.

WORDS **JOSH WINNING** PORTRAIT **CAROLYN COLE / LOS ANGELES TIMES / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES**





Money matters: Vinnie Daniel (Jeremy Strong) and Danny Moses (Rafe Spall) chase the money for Mark Baum (Steve Carell, above).

Margot Robbie in a bubble bath sipping champagne while she explains America's scabrous financial system direct to camera... Doesn't sound like your average Wall Street drama, does it? That's because *The Big Short* is anything but. For a start, it's directed by Adam McKay, who swaps the belly laughs of *Anchorman* and *Step Brothers* for a darkly humorous adaptation of Michael Lewis' tell-all book. Think *Moneyball* via *The Wolf Of Wall Street* and you're halfway there.

Then there's Ryan Gosling in fake tan and a steel-wool wig as Deutsche Bank dealmaker Jared Vennett (based on Greg Lippmann), who's tipped off by Michael Burry (Christian Bale) that betting against the housing market will reap rewards in the billions when the market inevitably crashes in 2008. "We didn't want to make it sexy, this world or these characters," Gosling tells *Total Film* of his transformation. "We wanted to humanise it, make it less Wall Street, this monolith that is impenetrable."

"Maybe in the context of this world, these guys are the heroes, but that's just in relation to how insidious everybody else is," chuckles Carell, who plays brash hedge-fund manager Mark Baum. So, playing real-life antiheroes in a film from the guy who previously directed Will Ferrell as a jazz-flute-playing newsreader, with cameos including Selena Gomez and the aforementioned Robbie... Must've been an interesting ride, right? Gosling and Carell can hardly contain their excitement as we catch up with them in New York (on the 38th floor of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, just five miles north of Wall Street, where the film's events played out for real in '08), especially because *The Big Short* is already getting the Academy buzzing.

'SOME PARTS OF THE MOVIE ARE JUST ABSURDIST COMEDY, THEN DRAMA. IT FEELS LIKE A HEIST MOVIE AT ONE POINT' STEVE CARELL

Smart in specs and coal-grey jacket, Carell's the composed yin to Gosling's laidback yang, the latter wearing an embroidered jacket over a tight white tee, his baby blues sparkling mischievously. "Oh God, I just love him," Carell says of reuniting with Gosling after previously sparring with him in 2011's *Crazy Stupid Love*. Muses Gosling: "What makes this movie so unique is that it sets itself up like it's a heist movie and then it doesn't celebrate the score."

ON TRAN$FORMATION$

STEVE CARELL Ryan stepped out of the make-up trailer for the first time in his outfit and I said, "Don't ever do this again! Except for this movie, don't ever do it."

RYAN GOSLING We tried to have a different colour tan every scene. A different shade, like one of those colour charts where you just go for every version. It was the early 2000s, so I don't think the fake tan had been perfected yet. [*laughs*]

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Brain trusts: Michael Burry (Christian Bale) spots a flaw in the financial system and (below); Ryan Gosling dons fake tan as banker Jared Vennett.



The spray tan wasn't as nuanced as it is now.

CARELL The guy that I play, Mark Baum, had crazy hair; he told me that the only reason his wife married him was because of his hair. He had just a big mop and he was also a bit overweight. His wife owns a boutique and she's very stylish; she would buy him clothes, like nice clothes. The suits that I wear, it's nice stuff, but it doesn't look good on him because nothing really fits properly and you couldn't make him look anything but a little bit frumpy. He didn't really care! Adam asked me to put on some weight, so I put on 20-25lbs. I thought, "Oh, this is my chance to just go crazy!" They dyed my eyebrows, too, they bleached them out. I was not looking my best... But it felt right for the character.

ON COMEDY-DRAMA

GOSLING The tone of this movie was mercurial, we were trying to find it [*during filming*]. We wanted to show that this world's made up of people who have lives and are trying to make decisions in the moment and are at the mercy of the trends of the time, both in thought and culture and fashion. Those kind of things were things that came out of trying to find the tone.

CARELL With this material, Adam made almost a hybrid. There are certain aspects to it that seem like a documentary, some of the camera movements, some of the editing, but then other parts of it are just absurdist comedy and other parts are just drama. It feels like a heist movie at one point. I feel like he folds all these different types of genre into one another to make it as effective as he can make it.

GOSLING *Wayne's World* was the first movie I ever fell in love with. It probably made me want to be an actor to some degree. Abbott and Costello movies, *Singin' In The Rain*, those are the films that I loved as a kid and probably thought I would end up making – I just ended up taking a more dramatic route. It was hard to initially get those roles, and to just work and be able to make something that was challenging, that was more in the independent world for me. The time that I came into independent film, it was films like *The Believer*, which was very dramatic, and so that's where I thought I would be. It's not necessarily all I wanted to make or why I got into acting in the first place. So now that I have more choice, I'm trying to make more the kind of films that I initially wanted to make.

ON BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL

CARELL There's a great line that Ryan's character says early on in the movie, when he breaks the fourth wall and he talks to the camera, and he says, "Are you lost? Do you feel kinda stupid? Well that's exactly what the banks want." They've created this language so you feel stupid and you don't ask questions. Moments like that are so specific and engage the audience in such a great way that it makes it accessible.

GOSLING I grew up on *Saved By The Bell* and Zack Morris was always talking to me directly every Saturday morning, so for me it's a very natural way to tell a story. And I thought when I became an actor, I'd be doing it all the time, but you're never allowed to do it now, it's like a taboo, and it's frowned upon. It was very exciting to be able to look in the lens, get my Zack Morris on.

ON THE MCKAY EFFECT

CARELL You know, there's not a lot of depth of character in *Anchorman*, there's not a lot of exploration of themes... But working with Adam was the same [*this time*] in the sense that it was the same guy; he's still the same really smart, funny person that directed those movies and there's a freedom to working with him that was the same in this. He likes people to improvise, he likes people to feel like they're part of the creation, and you have a huge freedom to fail as well, because you know he's going to protect you.

GOSLING To work with Adam McKay, I'm a huge fan. What I like about what Adam's done... Adam said the other day, 'cos someone was saying, "These aren't really heroes, how are we supposed to root for them?" He's like, "Heroes have sordid pasts. I'm sure if you went back in time and met Hercules, you'd probably think he was a dick." It's more complicated and you don't know whether you should root for them or not. >>





CARELL They were pursuing the truth, so it's difficult to define them. You can't really say, "Are they heroes?" I don't know. It's odd because you see that the audience is rooting for them, but then at the same time, you *catch* yourself rooting for them because if they win, millions of people are affected by it. That grey area was interesting to me.

ON THE FINANCIAL CRA$H

GOSLING I was not personally affected by it. I made my film [Lost River] in Detroit, so I have some experience with people who were, but the whole country was affected by it, you can feel it and we're still reeling from the effects of it.

CARELL I think everybody at least knew people. I owned my house so I wasn't affected per se, but it impacted so many people. I don't think it was discussed enough. I felt like it was reported, but I feel like we're so inundated with information every day, and bad information, tragic information, that this didn't have the impact on people that it should've had.

ON PRODUCER AND CO-$TAR BRAD PITT

CARELL I met him once. I never worked with Christian Bale, either; I didn't meet him until we started doing press. There's one day, the scene where we've arriving in Las Vegas, our teams sort of pass each other, but that's the only day that I met Brad.

GOSLING You have to respect what [*Pitt's production company*] Plan B is doing. It's such a special company. To make *12 Years A Slave* and then this, that's an amazing range and all in the effort to tell socially conscious and responsible films in an auteur-driven way. As a producer, he's a very graceful guy. He would be on set but never imposing, but present, and allowing everyone to do their work, but there if you needed anything. I thought he handled it well.

CARELL I've spoken to him since about the movie and why he got involved. I don't know him at all, but he seems like such an intelligent, passionate guy. Really, really cared about the world and bringing the book to the screen. My hat's off to him.

ON TECHNO BABBLE

CARELL I didn't know anything. I didn't know what a CDO was, or a synthetic CDO, credit swap... All of this was like a foreign language to me, and to at least learn a little bit about it, and to then get a sense through the eyes of these characters of what the banks were trying to pull on the public, that was great.

GOSLING Adam found a way to make it interesting and so did Michael Lewis. I was fascinated by this when we were working on it and it is actually very interesting. I say that, I was surprised that I actually found it interesting, but you have to get through the surface stuff. You realise there are just human beings that are driving the car, and we're passengers.

ON THE REAL GUY$

CARELL There's a lot going on inside of that guy, I think, and the person I met, he's still going through stuff. All of these guys are still shattered by this experience; it was difficult and they still wear the tragedy. He was dealing with a personal tragedy as well, which I think informed a lot of how he handled himself and what he did. He's an



Boss man: Baum (Steve Carell) asks all the right questions and (top left) Brad Pitt provides the film's moral core as Ben Rickert.

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Financial crash: Bale's hedge fund manager takes a break.

'WE TRIED TO HAVE A DIFFERENT COLOUR OF TAN IN EVERY SCENE'

RYAN GOSLING

interesting guy, he's very brash and he's bold and he's outspoken, but I think he also has a big heart and cares deeply about his family and about what he perceives to be right. But he wasn't going to turn down a $200m profit, so there's that!

GOSLING [*Greg Lippmann*] was very helpful. It can't be easy to have a movie made out of your life, have somebody play you, and in the face of that, he really tried to help me understand where his head was at, where the heads of the people around him were at, the financial terminology, helping me to really explain these financial instruments. He was helpful.

CARELL I saw Mark Baum at the premiere and he said, "Boy I was so nervous." I said, "Why?" He said, "I thought you were gonna make me out to be some kind of asshole." [*laughs*] He was really happy!

ON DIRECTING

CARELL Maybe some day. If something came along that I was interested in, or if I wrote something. But I think I'm pretty inherently lazy, and that takes a lot of work. You really have to devote a couple of years if you want to do it right, and I'd want to. I have little kids, too, so I kind of like that when I'm done with a job, I'm with them 'til my next job.

GOSLING The movie I'm working on now, I'm working with a writer. I ended up doing everything myself on my last film [Lost River] just so that I could find out how they're made, you know? I wanted to be involved. As an actor, you only have your role in it, but there's so much more to it, so I had the full experience... I never went to film school, so that was my school. I had to do it all from start to finish. So now I have a practical understanding of how to make a movie and now I think, when I develop these next projects, I know where more of my talents lie and where I'd like to work with other people.

ON WHAT'$ NEXT

CARELL I wasn't seeking this one out, Adam called me up and said, "I have this movie, are you interested?" I don't have a real plan of attack, but I'd like to do more comedies. I don't know. I just did a Woody Allen movie, came out of the blue, I'm shooting a movie with Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, who directed *Little Miss Sunshine*, with Emma Stone, which is going to be sort of in that same *Little Miss Sunshine* world, dramatic but having comedic moments as well.

GOSLING With *Blade Runner 2*, first of all, I have to say that if I say too much about it, I have a chip in my neck that will explode my head, so I have to be careful choosing my words... But it's a dream project. I'm such a huge fan of the original and then to work with Denis Villeneuve, who I'm a huge fan of as well, and Roger Deakins, and Harrison Ford, and Ridley Scott, on extending that story – and it is an extension of that story, it is a really interesting extension of that story and the world – is a dream. I'm very excited. The original's an incredible film, it's an amazing world, it's the reason so many people have borrowed from it, and it's exciting to actually be able to go into that world. TF

***The Big Short* opens on 22 January.**

TRUE LI

TFM NEWS

WORDS **JAMES MOTTRAM**

Starring Robert Redford and Cate Blanchett, **Truth** dramatises military record. But with CBS questioning the film's depiction of

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the furore over a 60 Minutes report about George W. Bush's events, investigative journalism has come under fire...

September 8 2004 is a date that's doubtless ingrained in the mind of Mary Mapes. A producer on *CBS News*, this well-respected journalist had already picked up a Peabody Award for breaking the story on the Abu Ghraib tortures in Iraq in 2003, where US army personnel violated the human rights of prisoners of war on a massive scale. As scandalous as that was, Mapes had an even bigger story cued up: the war record of President George W. Bush.

Working on it for five years, the tenacious Mapes had obtained memos from a confidential source suggesting that Bush had received preferential treatment in the Texas Air National Guard in the 1970s. Included in the papers were statements by Bush's commander – the late Lieutenant Colonel Jerry B. Killian – that he was being pressured to "sugarcoat" the future President's military performance; that Bush had skipped a physical and Guard duties to work on an Alabama Republican Senate campaign.

In the wake of the Iraq invasion, to discover the President had dodged Vietnam was gold-dust. Aired on the September 8 edition of CBS' flagship show *60 Minutes*, presented by veteran anchorman Dan Rather, the authenticity of the documents was immediately called into question – not least on the internet. "This is the moment the internet really came alive for the first time and affected a story with this kind of backlash and speed," says writer-director James Vanderbilt. "Now we live in the 24-second news cycle. But this was the first time that really happened."

Vanderbilt's new movie *Truth*, starring Cate Blanchett as Mapes and Robert Redford as Rather, dramatises what became known as one of the biggest on-air blunders ever committed. Anachronisms in the typography of the papers were exposed; suggestions were made they'd been created using Microsoft Word. Mapes' source, Texas National Guard officer Bill Burkett, having burnt the originals, supplied copies of the so-called Killian documents that experts were unable to authenticate. Twelve days later, Rather delivered a live apology – a "mistake in judgement" had been made.

The fallout was swift and brutal. Mapes' contract was terminated; shockingly, she never returned to journalism. "She was radioactive after this happened," explains Vanderbilt. "I think people were afraid to hire her because they would think 'What would that say about us as a news organisation?' Her name was mud. So I don't think she was employable on that level. And I don't know if she would've wanted to do it again... Because that was such a traumatic experience for her."

By 2005, Mapes published her book *Truth And Duty: The Press, The President, And The Privilege Of Power* – the main source for Vanderbilt's film. The same year, Rather stepped down as anchor after 24 years in the hot seat, the longest tenure in American television history. Within twelve

months, he'd left CBS after 44 years. In 2007, Rather filed a $70 million lawsuit against CBS, its former parent company Viacom and various individuals, accusing the network of making him a "scapegoat" in the Killian story.

The bitterness simply wouldn't go away. "I was fired for airing a story that could not definitively be proved false but made CBS's public relations department cringe," Mapes later told *The Washington Post*. But was this simply bad reporting? Or does it signify something else? "Investigative journalism is an endangered species right now, and a lot of that has to do with money," says Vanderbilt. "News organisations are spending, I feel, less and less money on letting reporters on longer-lead stories."

For Vanderbilt, *Truth* offered the chance to explore a world he was always fascinated with (his script for David Fincher's masterly 2007 true-crime tale *Zodiac* was set in the offices of the *San Francisco Chronicle* as reporters try to track down the titular serial killer). Curiously, *Truth* arrives at a time when investigative reporting



This is the news: (clockwise from main) Mary Mapes (Cate Blanchett) and lawyer Dick Hibey (Andrew McFarlane) face scrutiny; Dan Rather (Robert Redford) faces the public; the CBS team examines the evidence; and Elisabeth Moss appears as producer Lucy Scott.

'THE FILM TRIES TO PRESENT THINGS EVENLY; EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS, HAPPENED'
- CATE BLANCHETT

is under the movie microscope, with Tom McCarthy's *Spotlight* examining the work of *The Boston Globe*'s triumphant exposé of abuse in the Catholic Church.

Inevitably, Vanderbilt's film will be compared to 1976's *All The President's Men*, which starred Redford and Dustin Hoffman as the two *Washington Post* reporters who uncovered the Nixon administration Watergate scandal. Similarly, Mapes' story was dealing with a sitting president. But, as Cate Blanchett points out, 30 years on, the difference comes "in the relationship a journalist has to the organisation that they work for". Back then, Woodward and Bernstein had the "unflinching, unwavering support" of their editor Ben Bradlee.

"Whereas Mary Mapes and Dan Rather," says Blanchett, "were not out of the box, wet-behind-the-ears cadet journalists. They were deeply experienced, well-respected journalists with an organisation that no longer gave them the backing because of the story they were covering. Some would say it was how they were covering it, but the dotting of the 'i's became more important than the truth behind the story. In 30 years, that's a very different approach that the organisation took to the journalists that were working for them."



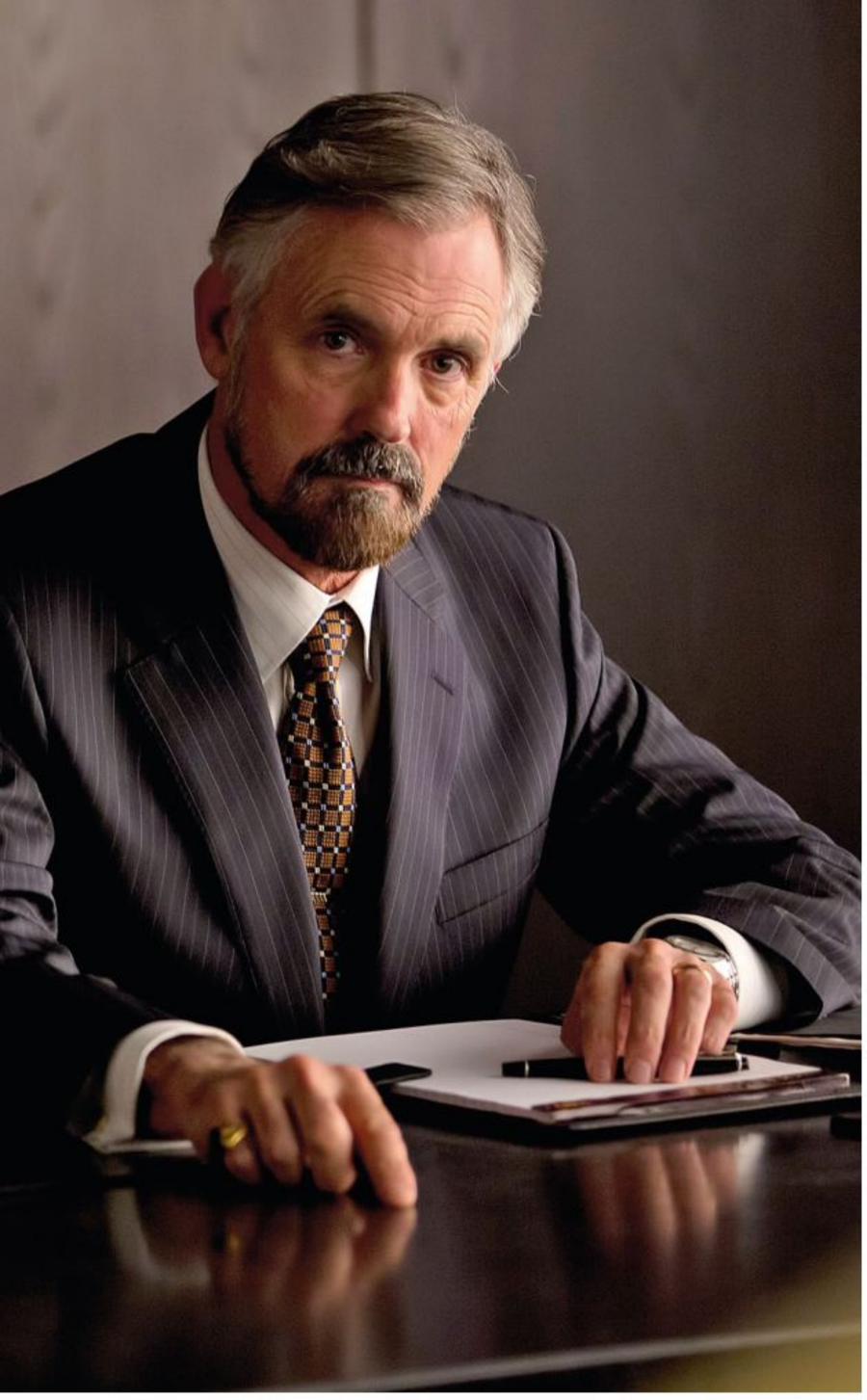
Sitting in London's Soho Hotel, aptly sifting through the weekend broadsheets when *Total Film* arrives, it's not Blanchett's first time playing a journalist. Back in 2003, the two-time Oscar-winner played the title role in *Veronica Guerin* – the Irish reporter murdered after exposing Dublin's drug barons. This was different – not least as Blanchett had the chance to meet the "deeply curious, passionate and committed" Mapes in person.

Mapes came to the set, despite the inevitable difficulties of "watching your life fall apart", as Vanderbilt puts it. "It's a loss for her," notes Blanchett. "Part of the bond between she and Dan was not only the loyalty and respect and admiration they had for each other, but their loyalty to the news organisation they worked for and their loyalty to the set of ideals that got them into journalism in the first place – journalism as a public duty – and I think they got betrayed by those ideals."

Needless to say, there are always two sides to every story. In the run-up to the US release, it was reported that CBS refused to run adverts for *Truth*. The media firm responsible for buying up ad space on behalf of its US distributor, Sony Pictures Classics, hit a blockade when representatives approached the company to buy spots in commercial breaks during *60 Minutes* and other prestigious current affairs programmes



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like Stephen Colbert's *Late Show*, the *CBS Evening News* and *CBS This Morning*.

While it meant turning down millions of dollars in advertising revenue, CBS executives were adamant. "It's astounding how little truth there is in *Truth*," said Gil Schwartz, EVP of corporate communications for CBS (played briefly in the film by Steve Bastoni), to the Associated Press. "There are, in fact, too many distortions, evasions and baseless conspiracy theories to enumerate them all. The film tries to turn gross errors of journalism and judgment into acts of heroism and martyrdom."

He continued: "That's a disservice not just to the public but to journalists across the world, who go out every day and do everything within their power, sometimes at great risk to themselves, to get the story right." Perhaps it was no surprise CBS officials would react this way. As Brad Fischer, one of the film's producers noted, "I don't think anyone expected them to send flowers... I think the one thing that surprised everyone was the tone and the emotional nature."

Blanchett, who did appear on CBS' *Late Show* to promote the film, is up to speed. "A friend of mine who is a journalist sent me that article," she says. "They came out quite negatively about the version of events that they say the story portrayed. Mary was not able to speak. She was bound by contract by CBS not to speak to the media; therefore the blogosphere couldn't feed on her. So in fact the version of events received by the public has been very one-sided. And the film tries to present things evenly, even though it's based on Mary's set of events. But everything that happens in the film happened."

While some critics disagree with Blanchett's claim of balance (critic David Edelstein dubbed it "righteously one-sided"), questions still remain over Bush's war record. Back in 2000, Burkett made and then retracted a claim that he had been transferred to Panama for refusing "to falsify personnel records of [*then*-] Governor Bush". With Mapes based in Texas, she'd heard the stories. "The question mark hanging over his service had long been socialised in Texas," says Blanchett, "so she wasn't the only journalist who was aware of or chasing the story."

Whatever the truth, it's undeniable that Vanderbilt's film has a remarkable cast: Stacy Keach as Burkett; *Mad Men* star Elisabeth Moss as Mapes' associate producer Lucy Scott; Dennis Quaid as Lt. Colonel Roger Charles, a Vietnam veteran who became a liaison working with *60 Minutes*; Topher Grace as Mike Smith, the maverick researcher on Mapes' team; Bruce Greenwood as Andrew Heyward, former President of CBS News.

What's interesting about the film is the way it represents the shift in television news. "Around the time I was born [*in 1978*]," says Grace, "they figured out they could make money from news. And that's really the question the movie poses: can you tell the truth if certain stories get certain ratings and make more money? I know Dan took over from [*fellow anchor Walter*] Kronkite, so there was always a lot of respect for him. He was one of the main three anchors. Now I couldn't even tell you who are seen as the main anchors."

According to Moss, there is a "positive and negative side" to the way news reporting has changed in the aftermath of what became called 'Rather-gate'. The rise of Twitter means that "events can be reported" on the social media site "because the country won't let them report it on the news", she says; "the negative side to that is who knows who is reporting it? There's no background, there's no investigation; there's no research. You don't have somebody that you trust like Dan Rather."

Blanchett concurs. While *Truth*, she says, deals with "a very particular pocket of American media history", she believes it has a global relevance to what's happening today. "You have to say to yourself: 'Why tell it now?' It talks about the demise of investigative journalism. Well, where has that gone? In a way, the rise of the documentary has been really interesting and perhaps that's the realm where investigative journalism lies."

It's an intriguing and valid point – with documentarians like Errol Morris, Michael Moore and Alex Gibney conducting their own research into everything from miscarriages of justice to the war on terror to Scientology. Does *Truth* follow suit? "I love movies that ask questions rather than give you answers," notes Vanderbilt. "In the best version of this movie – and I hope we achieve it – it sends you out into the lobby thinking about some of those questions." TF

***Truth* opens on 4 March.**

HIGH-RISE

Ben Wheatley is the hottest filmmaker in Britain right now. Total Film goes on set of **High-Rise** to see how he's attracted Tom Hiddleston and a stunning support cast to film the blistering J.G. Ballard novel that's defied adaptation for 40 years.

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM



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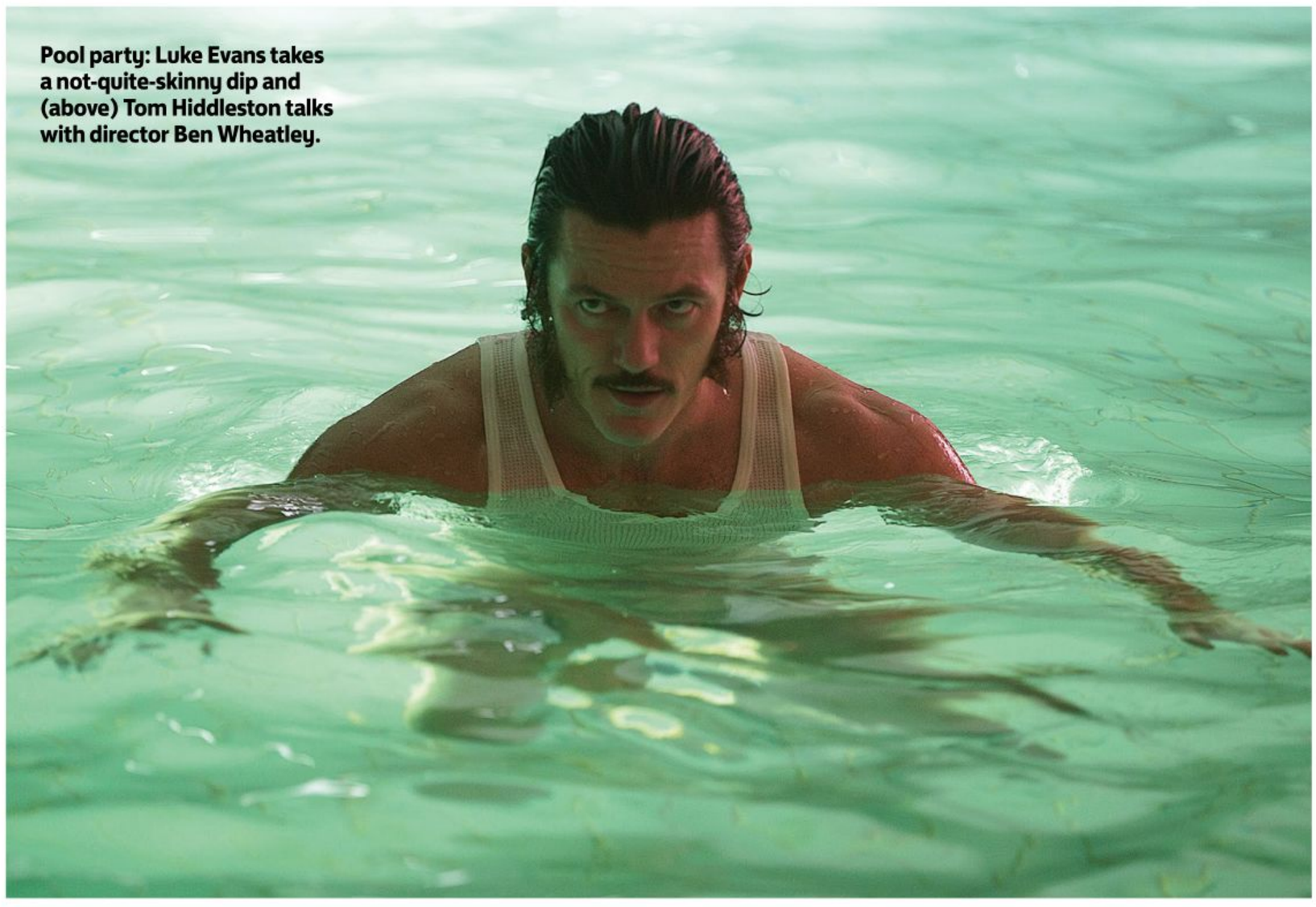
Tom Hiddleston roams the Bangor Castle Leisure Centre in Northern Ireland clad in a white towel dressing gown and white pumps. Spying *Total Film*, he sashays over to say hello and executes a neat twirl to show off his outfit. A length of thigh, a flash of pants. Half an hour later, emerging from a closed-set shower scene in a navy robe, a thought strikes him. "You're not going to write about the gown are you?" he grins knowingly. Well, it would make for a colourful intro....

It's mid-July 2014 and a 60-strong crew is buzzing around the leisure complex. Opened in 1970 and closed in March 2013, it hulks, dilapidated, but has been temporarily revived to offer locations for Ben Wheatley's adaptation of J.G. Ballard's *High-Rise*. The 1975 novel tells of a state-of-the-art tower block's descent into destruction as technology fails and residents plug into their inner darkness. Producer Jeremy Thomas, the man behind Cronenberg's Ballard adap *Crash*, has been trying to make *High-Rise* for 40 years, though even such a visionary director as Nicolas Roeg was defeated. Well, he's finally found his man in Wheatley. A fan of the book since his student days, and blithely unaware of its stop-start production history, he chased Thomas down with a fresh angle.

More on that later. Now, as ever on a Wheatley set, the atmosphere is one of overspilling joy and trammelled focus. From the outside, it's impossible to imagine how this squat grey building, though suitably Brutalist in design, can be turned into a soaring, shining 1970s tower block. Inside, the magic of movies is laid bare: apartments constructed on basketball courts, the same space used over and over as walls are added to transform the wide living spaces of the higher storeys into the cramped apartments of the lower floors; a couple of corridors and stairwells, dressed with varying amounts of furniture, shopping trolleys and rubbish bags, to represent multiple locations; and a swimming pool, at first full of sparkling chlorinated water, then filthy liquid clogged with detritus and a dead dog, now drained altogether. A stone flamingo regards the empty pit forlornly from a patch of AstroTurf.

And that's the just the start of it. A local supermarket is going to double for the tower block's extensive shopping facilities on the 10th floor; the carpark of the nearby Marks & Spencer will be mapped onto the base of the CGI high-rise for exterior shots; and Bangor Castle Wall Garden, a picturesque public space that's a 10-minute walk from the leisure centre, will be digitally lowered onto the computerised block of flats to form a rooftop garden. Today Hiddleston crosses a main road and enters the park to amble around a flowerbed in a silver-grey suit, his flares whipping. In the finished movie, this stroll will take place 40 storeys up, his head brushing the clouds. >>





Pool party: Luke Evans takes a not-quite-skinny dip and (above) Tom Hiddleston talks with director Ben Wheatley.

Wheatley's own ascent has been astonishing. A TV writer, director, editor and sometime actor, he filmed debut feature *Down Terrace* in a handful of days for a few thousand quid and released it upon an unsuspecting world in 2009. A gangster comedy unlike the raft of gangster comedies we'd seen over the preceding years – think Ken Loach with laughs and bloodletting – it won several awards, including Raindance and Fantastic Fest, and paved the way for *Kill List*, *Sightseers* and *A Field In England*. All added to Wheatley's cachet and led to this point: *High-Rise*, budgeted in the $5-$10m range. Such a sum, though loose change by Hollywood standards, represents a huge leap of investment, and the pedigree source material and Oscar-winning producer confirm *High-Rise* as a jump to the next level.

TOWERING INFERNO

Such is Wheatley's heat right now, actors are queuing up to work with him, all evidently attracted by his curveball sensibilities. British cinema, so often staid for so many years, is now enjoying something of a new wave, with Wheatley prominent in a pack of daring filmmakers that includes Steve McQueen, Peter Strickland, Joanna Hogg, Clio Barnard, Carol Morley, Richard Ayoade, Yann Demange and more.

"Ben's tastes create this amazing range of extremes," says Hiddleston, who plays Dr Robert Laing, resident of the 25th floor. "Some days it feels like it's about sophistication and refinement and an air of mischief and cool – adults behaving badly. And on other days, it's just how far do you dare to go into the heart of darkness?" Irons nods. His Anthony Royal is the architect of the high-rise and has ensconced himself in the penthouse suite. "Ben is an interesting director," he starts. "*Sightseers*, I think, is an extraordinary film, very original. I wanted to work with a director who has a skewed view of the world." Luke Evans plays Richard Wilder, a TV producer who's intent on clambering from his squalid box on the second-floor to Royal's penthouse; he will take a camera and document the running class battles en route. "Ben delivers movies that are thoroughly engrossing, incredibly challenging," he states, and we're not about to disagree given his denim shirt and fuzzed face is drenched in blood – he's just filmed a scene in which he breaks into the caretaker's apartment. James Purefoy, playing Pangbourne, a morally repugnant gynaecologist who resides on the 40th floor, agrees. "Ben has a highly original take on things," he says. "He lets actors try crazy shit out. Some of it fails abysmally, some of it is inspired, but none of it would happen without him encouraging you to go there in the first place." And Elisabeth Moss – AKA *Mad Men*'s

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PEG IT

Elisabeth Moss on the end of Mad Men and gearing up for movie domination...



Both *Mad Men* and *High-Rise* deal with bubbling neuroses and social breakdown...
Absolutely. Sometimes [*on* High-Rise] it was like we were shooting a war film. We were all covered in blood and bruises and dirt. Before every scene, they come up to you and pat you down with dirt. It became quite normal!

Was the finished film different to what you thought you were making?
It struck me how beautiful it is. I had no idea they were shooting it like that. It didn't feel like that. I remember walking up to the penthouse set for the first time, and it looked kind of shabby. You're like, "How is this going to work with the outdoor garden and everything? It looks very low-rent." And then, on screen, it just looks gorgeous.

Both the novel and the film of *High-Rise* contain a subtext of women taking over after the men have screwed up. How pleasing did you find that?
I do think it's interesting that the breakdown of the building brings out the worst in the men, and the best in the women. I'm obviously a feminist, but I'm very much a humanist as well. The whole point is that women aren't better than men; it's that they're equal. I can't say women could run the world any better than men could, but I think they should be given the opportunity.

Now that *Mad Men* is done, do you have a big plan for dominating the world of movies? Can we expect to see you in a Marvel movie?
If it was a good script, then yeah. For me, it's all about how good the script is. I don't care if it's a superhero film or if it's a tiny movie in upstate New York or if it's a British film like Ben's film. It's what I've always done. It's what I'm always looking for. **JG**

PA IMAGES





Mirror man: Dr Robert Laing (Hiddleston) takes time for reflection and (above) the titular high-rise blocks loom.

'BEN IS AN INTERESTING DIRECTOR. SIGHTSEERS, I THINK, IS AN EXTRAORDINARY FILM, VERY ORIGINAL. I WANTED TO WORK WITH A DIRECTOR WHO HAS A SKEWED VIEW OF THE WORLD'

JEREMY IRONS

Peggy – lobbied for the role of Helen Wilder. Why? "Because you know a Ben Wheatley film when you see it," she laughs. Her character is heavily pregnant so Moss' smoking of a cigarette draws disapproving glances from passers-by who are unaware of her bump's phoniness. "I'm such a big fan. He makes me giggle. Someone's going to have their face peeled off at some point. His movies aren't for pussies."

"I can't put my finger on it particularly," says Wheatley, asked if he's aware of the point when he became *the* British director that everyone, Americans included, wants to work with. "I think the work has helped. Doing lots of stuff. The longer the work is out there, the more it saturates in. It takes time for films to be seen. Something like *Kill List* is quite helpful in casting because actors see the chunky bits of performance. But for that film to be seen in the States takes a bit of time. Because it wasn't, like, a cultural event [*laughs*]. It's a bit like a little wanky indie band trying to break America. You tour a bit, but no one really knows who you are if you haven't got a hit. Your influence can be felt over time."

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Jeremy Thomas sits in his office in the bowels of the leisure centre. It's a decent-sized room but perfunctory in its furnishings, making his tales of three-course, waiter-service lunch breaks with Bernardo Bertolucci on the set of *The Last Emperor* seem all the more extravagant. Thomas tells *Total Film* about Wheatley arriving at his office, asking not for a handout but the opportunity for his wife and regular writer Amy Jump to pen a spec script. It would be her own version, not beholden to any of the *High-Rise* scripts previously written, and if Thomas didn't like it, they'd walk away.

"Everybody wants to work with Ben," says Thomas. "A producer's job is to know everybody's films so they can acquaint material with that >>

Good boy: Anthony Royal (Jeremy Irons) pets a canine pal and (below) James Purefoy plays Pangbourne.

person. You have to try to imagine what's going to happen a year later when the film's been made and edited and mixed and ready for you to work with. You think: these paints with this painter, they're going to make this painting." He smiles. "I'm getting what I expected, which is an originally composed, very well-shot film, with an enormous amount of material edited to richness. The material in the book is very challenging. The adaptation will be very challenging. For a grown-up audience that likes a lot of fun, this film is going to be like a rave. It's a fairly strong party with everybody losing their mind."

For years, Thomas had envisioned *High-Rise*, the movie, to be like *High-Rise*, the book – set in the near-future. Wheatley and Jump finally cracked it by insisting the film should be a period piece, set in the decade of the novel's publication.

"After a while, period becomes sci-fi," explains Wheatley. "You take a contemporary story and you put it in the past or in the future to give it distance. You can say things from those positions that you can't say in the moment because it feels too on the nose, or people don't want to be told because it's about their lives and they've got opinions about their own lives that they don't have about the past or about the future."



Setting the action in the '70s solved another problem, also. As Wheatley points out, the novel is set "15 minutes into the future", which becomes an issue when you're now actually living more than 30 years hence. The internet and social media break the novel's concept of a tower block in isolation, primal urges unchecked.

It's now the afternoon and Wheatley and his trusted DoP Laurie Rose get a couple more scenes in the can. They work fast, two or three takes, a holdover from the director's TV work that puts him in good stead when working on tightly budgeted features.

We're squashed into a tiny lower floor apartment as Moss tends to a window plant with a plastic green watering can. A seagull hits the window. She jumps, as required, but everyone is laughing because the gull hit upside down. The guy throwing the model tries again. It takes five attempts, surely a record number of takes for Wheatley, but finally he's happy and the bird's head is hanging off anyway.

Now it's Hiddleston's turn. Lift doors open on floor 25 and he stumbles out clutching a glass of whiskey. After a grin and a little dance, he finds his door, searches his pockets, locates and then drops his keys. He does three or four takes, each time offering a different level of drunkenness.

Hiddleston wanders over. He's holding his script which he's heavily annotated, writing out entire pages from the novel if he feels they are key to Laing's psychology, to Ballard's themes.

"I found an interview with Ballard and Jon Savage in 1975," he enthuses, "where Ballard says, 'Fairly soon, we won't just be taking photographs of our children, we'll be taking photographs of the food that we eat, of ourselves. We'll have access to thousands and thousands of hours of recorded media at any point of the day or night.' He basically predicts YouTube and selfies and Instagram, in 1975! He sees it coming, the new tyranny of technology."

STILL WATERS

Seventeen months later Hiddleston, Evans, Moss and Purefoy all stress the delight of working with Wheatley. Irons is also an admirer, though he notes, "I would say he's probably not an actor's director, in that he knows what he's going for in his head, and sort of lets the actors get on with it. But he pulled a wonderful performance out of Tom. So maybe I'm wrong in that." The rest of the cast certainly think so, content with the amount of freedom and trust they were granted. Hiddleston

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View from the top: Sienna Miller breaks between takes and (below) Richard Wilder (Luke Evans) goes gonzo.



shares a key piece of direction: "Ben and I talked about the difference between two saucepans on a hob. They both have a lid on. One of them is empty, and one is full of boiling water. Is there a difference in the quality of the saucepan with boiling water in it? That's what I'm hoping to do with Laing. He looks still, but there's a lot going on inside."

And so Wheatley's rise is set to continue. With *High-Rise* not even out yet, he's already shot and edited Boston-set crime drama *Free Fire*, starring Brie Larson, Armie Hammer, Cillian Murphy, Sharlto Copley, Sam Riley, Noah Taylor, Jack Reynor and his old mucker Michael Smiley. And now he's rumoured to be lining up a remake of Henri-Georges Clouzot's suspense-stuffed masterpiece *The Wages Of Fear* (already remade, brilliantly, by William Friedkin as *Sorcerer*). Wheatley's pace never slackens, but the movies keep getting bigger. You don't have to be Ballard to predict a blockbuster in the not-too-distant future, should he desire it...

"There are all sorts of flavours of cinema to be experienced as a director, so I would never say never to larger stuff," he shrugs. "But I've also got plans to do some ultra-low budget stuff as well. I think making stuff is the most important thing, and not getting tied into chasing projects. It could take six, seven years to develop [*a big project*]. I'm not that keen on that. I have had scripts, but generally I'm too busy to do it because you're always trying to work a year or two years ahead." He pauses. "But if it's something spectacular..."

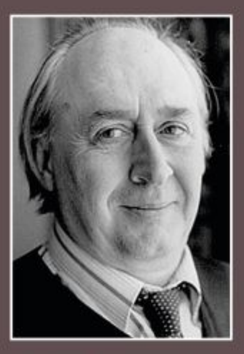
One thing's for sure: whatever happens, big or small, people will be clamouring to be a part of it. TF

***High-Rise* opens on 18 March.**

HIGH-RISE

BALLARD 101

J.G. Ballard, boxed...



WHO IS HE?
James Graham Ballard was a novelist and essayist whose dystopian visions of a world knocked off its axis by ecological disaster, societal anarchy and the misuse of technology saw him likened in his lifetime to the likes of George Orwell and *Brave New World* writer Aldous Huxley. Born in 1930 in the Shanghai International Settlement, 'J.G.' partly owed his jaundiced view of humanity to having his own world inverted by the Japanese invasion of 1941 and the three years he spent with his family in an internment camp.

THAT SOUNDS FAMILIAR...
Probably because it was the basis of *Empire Of The Sun*, a semi-autobiographical book that Steven Spielberg filmed in 1987 with Christian Bale. *Crash*, about a guy turned on by car accidents, was also (controversially) made into a 1996 psycho-thriller by David Cronenberg.

WHAT ELSE HAS HE WRITTEN?
Concrete Island, about a man stranded in a motorway intersection; *Cocaine Nights*, about a Spanish resort full of murderous ex-pats; and *Kingdom Come*, his final novel, in which a suburban mega-mall plays host to a sinister cult.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?
Uncannily prescient, Ballard spent his 78 years being ahead of the curve. He correctly tipped Reagan as a future president (in a 1967 pamphlet called 'Why I Want To Fuck Ronald Reagan'), foresaw the perils of the information age and can even be said to have predicted YouTube. ("Every home will be transformed into a TV studio," he said in 1987. "We'll be simultaneously actor, director and screenwriter in our own soap opera.") No wonder he was dubbed "the Seer of Shepperton" and has an adjective ('Ballardian') in the Collins English Dictionary.

FAMOUS FANS?
Loads. Joy Division named their song 'Atrocity Exhibition' after Ballard's 1970 novella collection, Madonna based her 'Drowned World' track on his 1962 novel and Manic Street Preachers included a sample of his voice on their 1994 album *The Holy Bible*.

WHERE IS HE NOW?
Kensal Green Cemetery, having died in 2009 of prostate cancer.

WEIRD FACT
One of Ballard's early stories, 'Gulliver In Space', was written for a 1966 edition of *Jackanory*. **NS**

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HE'S THE PRAGMATIC ACTOR WHO ADMITS TO TAKING JOBS FOR THE MONEY, AND AS PERFORMANCES IN HEART-WRENCHING DRAMA CHRONIC AND QT'S THE HATEFUL EIGHT HIT CINEMAS, TIM ROTH REFLECTS ON A 34-YEAR CAREER. "IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT HAVING A LONG SHELF LIFE. YEAH, I'VE DONE A LOT OF SHIT MOVIES AND I'VE DONE A LOT OF GOOD ONES..."

WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM** PORTRAIT **JOHN RUSSO/CORBIS OUTLINE**

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TIM ROTH



Tim Roth is sneaking a crafty cigarette out of the window. Taking a final drag as *Total Film* walks into the hotel room, he tosses the butt and flaps his arm wildly to keep the smoke out as he ducks back in.

The 54-year-old actor is holed up in a London hotel to promote *The Hateful Eight*, his first team up with Quentin Tarantino for two decades. Roth, of course, was there at the start, playing Mr. Orange in *Reservoir Dogs*, Pumpkin in *Pulp Fiction* and Ted the Bellhop in *Four Rooms*. And while there's a certain symmetry to his reuniting with QT on this particular project (the tale of eight strangers trapped in a log cabin, its bickering-and-bullets scenario conjures ghosts of the colour-coded criminals in Tarantino's debut – albeit with sharp shooters now replacing sharp suits), you have to wonder, why the big gap?

"We don't think about it like that," shrugs Roth, proffering a bottle of cold water and a firm handshake. "It just seems like yesterday. It's odd. We've stayed in touch over the years. He wanted me to do *Inglourious Basterds*, and I couldn't because of scheduling and all that."

Tarantino is just one of a long and extremely distinguished list of filmmakers that Roth has worked with: Robert Altman, Woody Allen, Tim Burton, Werner Herzog, Francis Ford Coppola, Michael Haneke... His knack of acting for the best was evident from the off, when Roth, aged 20, made his screen debut in Alan Clarke's blistering *Made In Britain*. That swaggeringly aggressive turn as violent skinhead Trevor turned heads and fixed eyes, and he promptly followed it up by working for Mike Leigh and Stephen Frears in, respectively, *Meantime* (with pal Gary Oldman) and *The Hit*.

These three films are belters. Not everything in the intervening 30 years has been ("I've got a ton of shit films. They're a part of me too") but



'TARANTINO WAS ALWAYS A FINE WRITER. HIS STUFF IS GOING MORE AND MORE TOWARDS LITERATURE'

the failures – Burton's *Planet Of The Apes* remake, 2014 Cannes-opener *Grace Of Monaco*, and several movies you've never heard of – are part and parcel of the job. Roth isn't too concerned, frankly admitting that he, and most other actors, take gigs for the money, that studio politics come into play, and that some movies just don't spark.

One thing's for sure: he's a frank, fast-talking interview, meeting questions head on just as he's made a career out of fearlessly shouldering tough parts that go to dark places. This is true of his *other* new movie, *Chronic*, in which he plays a home care nurse working with terminally ill patients. An affecting drama put together with great tenderness, unflinching honesty and zero schmaltz, Roth's detailed, lived-in performance was heavily tipped for Best Actor at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. That didn't come to pass, but he's justly proud of the film.

"*Chronic* would come right to the top, funnily enough," he says when asked which of his many movies he's most proud of. Leaning back in his seat and crossing his booted feet, he sucks on an e-cigarette. "I mean, *Chronic* and *The Hateful Eight* I particularly like because they're so different from each other."

Let's start with Tarantino. There is, after all, so much to say...

How is Quentin now different to the whippersnapper you met on *Reservoir Dogs*?

He's the same guy. But we were under constraints on that one. We shot it in five weeks. He had no money, and he hadn't been on a film set before. Now he has all the equipment and all the tools that he needs to tell his stories. But the knowledge that he had as a filmmaker, even at the very beginning, was quite extraordinary. It's an obsession of his, and he landed on his feet.

Did you have a sense, on the set of *Reservoir Dogs*, that this guy was making something special?

You got that from reading the script. I was about 20 pages in, and I was reaching for the phone. I said, "This guy, I don't know who this is, but this is incredible." And I don't think I'd even got to my character at that point. Actually, I was looking at different characters [*Mr. Blonde and Mr. Pink*]. That was weird. But you definitely got the sense

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Giving care: Roth plays nurse David in the Palme d'Or nominated *Chronic*.

that he was special. Then when we were filming it, Harvey [*Keitel*] turned to me and said, "This is good, right?" I went, "Yeah, this is good." He said, "Don't jinx it, don't jinx it!"

What about Tarantino's growth as a filmmaker? *Reservoir Dogs* is 99 minutes. *The Hateful Eight* is long and novelistic...

Yeah. That started immediately with him. *Pulp Fiction*. As soon as he was like, "Oh, I'm allowed to play in this world? OK, then I'm going to make what I want to make..." The films are as long as they need to be. *Kill Bill* was, *1* and *2*. He's more of a writer, even more than he was, and he was always a fine writer. But I find his stuff is going more and more towards literature.

He's always said he's going to retire at 10 films. That won't happen, will it?

Oh, I think it will. I don't think he'll retire completely. I think he'll change his arena. But yeah, I think it's actually going to happen. He said that he doesn't want to be like older directors who have made some great movies, but people now go, "Oh, it was good – but not as good his *real* work, obviously". He's going to go out with a bang. So, if it takes him four years to make a movie, he's got two left before he's 60. And then he's going to do plays. He might do television. He might write books.

Your character, Oswaldo Mobray, must have been fun to play. He's the florid Englishman you find in many westerns. Did you have reference points?

For the Terry-Thomas-ness? Our references were Terry Thomas [*laughs*], Edward Fox in *A Bridge Too Far*, and then Bill Sikes from David Lean's *Oliver Twist*.

Do you view *The Hateful Eight* as a comedy? Harvey Weinstein says it will make you laugh your ass off...

I think that's on you guys. Harvey's got his own take on it, and audience members will. It's beautifully written and very funny. But it turns on a dime. You'll be laughing one minute, and you'll be flinching the next. It's very cleverly constructed. No, I don't think you can broadly say it's a comedy at all. I think it's a political piece. I think it's immensely grown up and very, very sharp. But it is funny. His humour is always in the front.

You also have *Chronic* coming out. How did you prepare to play a carer for terminally ill patients?

The preparation for that was really difficult. I spent a lot of time with nurses, and I spent a lot of time with patients, who were incredible because they gave me some of their final time. Their relationship with their nurses, with their final people, was so strong generally. The patients were very insistent that I get it right, that I played their nurse with honour and dignity. The relationship between the nurse and the hospice palliative care worker and the family surrounding the patient is the most important thing – and it's quite often the most difficult relationship the carer will have. Because you're in there in a very personal way, in between them and the patient.

Did making *Chronic* change your attitude to death at all?

It did. Actually, I'm not sure it made it better. I'm not sure I've come to terms with it completely. I mean, I'm 54, so you have to re-examine mortality. You realise at that point you're not indestructible [laughs]. That's all happening, and then, being in close proximity to people's death... It was a complicated time. Death is the last taboo. We discuss everything else, but we ignore and run away from our dying. [*Pause*] I wouldn't want to be a nurse in any way. I am so fucking humbled by them. They're amazing people.

There was talk of you winning Best Actor at Cannes. Do awards matter to you?

Well, they're pretty. I mean, I've got them in my office at home. They're an acknowledgement of your worth, in some bizarre way. I think they mean more to the business people's side of it, than they do to us, to be honest. But it's nice.

Did you enjoy being at the Oscars when you were nominated for *Rob Roy*?

No, I had a headache and my wife [*fashion designer Nikki Butler*] needed a pee. I mean, really. For real. The one moment that was fun, was that Sam [*Jackson*] was in front of me, >>

FIVE STAR TURNS

RIGHT-ON ROTH...



1 MADE IN BRITAIN 1982 ★★★★

Dropping into a south London theatre to borrow a bicycle pump, Roth found himself auditioning for the role of Trevor, a racist, glue-sniffing skinhead whose contempt for polite society is as plain as the swastika etched on his glabella. Director Alan Clarke was so impressed, he recommended Mike Leigh cast Tim in *Meantime*.



2 RESERVOIR DOGS 1992 ★★★★★

Initially put up for Misters Pink and Blonde in QT's hugely influential thriller, Roth plumped for Orange "because he's a liar. I'll be an Englishman, playing an American, playing a cop who's playing a villain." The actor's reward for spending weeks on end dying in a pool of blood? *Pulp Fiction*'s Pumpkin and the bellhop part in *Four Rooms*.



3 ROB ROY 1995 ★★★★

"Love is a dunghill, Betty, and I am but a cock that climbs upon it to crow." Who else but Archibald Cunningham, the deplorable, bewigged nemesis of Liam Neeson in Michael Caton-Jones' celebration of Scotland's legendary outlaw? "Villains are fun to play and stick in people's minds," says Roth, who has this film to thank for his only Oscar nom to date.



4 THE INCREDIBLE HULK 2008 ★★★

Having buried his features beneath a mountain of prosthetics for Tim Burton's *Planet Of The Apes* reboot, Roth took playing mo-cap mutant The Abomination in his stride in Marvel's second stab at reviving its beloved Hulk character. "I did it purely for my little boys," the actor confesses. "If you're going to be on a lunchbox, it should be cool."



5 SELMA 2014 ★★★★

Never afraid to play a bigot, Roth brought a lip-smacking relish to his role as Alabama governor George Wallace in Ava DuVernay's powerful history lesson. "There's not a lot to love in Wallace," the filmmaker concedes. "But Tim found an article of his son talking about him, so was able to tap into the father doing what he thought was right." **NS**

sitting with Quentin. Sam turned around and said, "Now, when you lose..." – which is a great statement in itself – "say, 'Mother-FUCKER!' because you're in the five-shot." Because when he lost, he did do that. I didn't have the balls to do it. I wish. If I could go back and relive it, I would do that.

You've had a great shelf life as an actor...

When me and Gary Oldman were working together, we thought we'd go and see if we could crack America. Our take on it was "All the pretty boys are out there and they're always looking over their shoulder. They're always replaceable. But the actors aren't. The actual actors are not." It was always about having a long shelf life. Yeah, I've done a lot of shit movies and I've done a lot of good ones.

Can you name the ones you're particularly proud of?

Chronic is an incredible piece of work. *Made In Britain*, *Meantime*, *The Hit* – the really early stuff. I like *Vincent & Theo*. *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern* [Are Dead]. *Little Odessa*. A strange one, which frustrated me but was interesting, is *Youth Without Youth*. I had no idea what was going on, and I think that was evident in the film [*laughs*]. Erm... the Woody Allen musical [Everyone Says I Love You]. Like, what the fuck was I thinking?



'I WAS THE OPPOSITE OF TREVOR. I WAS A VICTIM OF THOSE GUYS, SO I KNEW HOW TO PLAY HIM'

But it's kind of a laugh. Actually, I know what I was thinking: I wanted to make my wife happy. She loves musicals.

That's a decent batting average...

I just did a thing [Reg] for the BBC. I played a guy, a real guy who lost his son in Iraq, and took on Tony Blair. Reg Keys. I fucking loved it.

Naturally. You've always been outspoken about Blair...

I fucking hate Blair. He's a war criminal. He should be handcuffed and marched away.

You mentioned *Made In Britain*. That character, Trevor, a Nazi skinhead, is sickeningly cocky. Did you strut and swagger as a young man?

I was the opposite. I was the one that was a victim of those guys. So I knew how to play him. I recognised him in the writing. I had bullshit and swagger and all of that nonsense [*a bit later*], right up until after *Reservoir Dogs* – I was full of shit, but that's alright, it protects you – but you grow out of that stuff.

Didn't you fake a cockney accent at school because you were bullied?

Yeah. My home was in Dulwich but we weren't wealthy in any way. So I arrived at school in Tulse Hill and it took me three days to learn my first accent. I had the shit kicked out of me for three days. It was not good.

***Made In Britain* was directed by Alan Clarke. You've worked with a whole list of greats. Is there a common thread between them?**

Whatever [*those people*] were doing, they were completely passionate about it. They had that drive. An obsession.

You directed *The War Zone*. Will you direct again?

I want to. I was in the editing room at the time, and Gary [*Oldman*] said, "I bet you never want to act again." I said, "No, I don't." It was, for me, the job that I wanted. But when you have kids [*Roth has three sons*], you have to sacrifice. Or you just don't have kids, which is the other way of doing it. Quentin's sacrificed that to do what he's doing. I have to put a roof over my kids' heads. I have to make sure they get through college without student loans hanging over them. You know, well done Blair. But seriously, fuck you, to him. I've had this thing where once they're through school, maybe I'll go back.

***The War Zone* dealt with sexual abuse. You've gone on record that you were abused as a child. It must have been a horrific to put your head back in that space, but was it also cathartic?**

It was cathartic in a sense, because... I mean, if you're an abused kid, it's one of those things that you hide. Actually, I remember when I first talked about it, I think I was 25. My dad asked, "Did my dad ever fuck with you?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Yeah, me too." That opened the door, because we had a shared abuser. We had the same guy in common, who's an arsehole. Then as soon as you're done... I assume it's like coming out, if you're gay and you're hiding it. Then it was easy.

You filmed on some of the locations where you suffered abuse...

I insisted on going back and shooting in exactly those locations. All of it was cathartic. It was only when I was doing the press, about a year into it... That's when I crashed. I just thought, "I can't talk about this anymore." It got to me. It was so fucking deep and dark that I thought, 'I'm done.'

Like Oldman with *Nil By Mouth*, you cast Ray Winstone as your lead...

Ray was fucking hilarious. I gave him the script and I get him in. I can hear him coming up the stairs. Boom, boom, boom – it's fucking exhausting, it was on the top floor. He walks in and he's covered in Russian military camouflage, head to toe; hilarious shit. He walks in and he says, "Fucking hell" [*breathes heavily*]. It took him a while. I said, "What do



Two of Eight: Roth as Oswaldo Mobray opposite Walton Goggins' Chris Mannix in *The Hateful Eight*.

LIFELINE

14 MAY 1961
Born in Dulwich, London to teacher Ann and political journalist Ernie.

1982-1984
Made In Britain, *Meantime* and *The Hit* make him part of the Brit Pack.

1989-1990
Goes arthouse, working for Peter Greenaway, Robert Altman and Tom Stoppard.



1992-1995
Team QT: *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Four Rooms*. Oscar-nominated for *Rob Roy*.

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you think?" He went, "Well, it'd be good to play a good guy for a change." And that really was right. Because if you take the abuse out of it, you would assume that was a good guy. Man who loves his kids, who loves his family, just trying to do right by them. And he's wrongly accused of something, until we look through the window and we see it's all theatre. Ray completely got it.

A different kind of violence is at play in *Funny Games U.S*...

That was one of the hardest jobs I've done. It was shot in sequence. So you start the day distressed. You become more distressed. And you pick it up the next day at that level. And it gets worse. All the way through, for six weeks. It was a horrendous experience. Awful. And I don't think it particularly succeeded.

You said earlier that you've made some crap movies. Do you consider *Planet Of The Apes* one of those?

I think I was rather good in it. I think *Planet Of The Apes* is rather good. But it's not the film that Tim [*Burton*] wanted to make. He was at the mercy of the machine. Me and him tried to slide in as much dark shit as we possibly could. I think if he made it now, it would be a really amazing film. But he was in a corner with that. No, crap films would be like the Sepp Blatter thing [United Passions]. It broke my heart to do that fucking film. But fuck it. You've got to put a roof over heads. But it's a piece of shit. That's alright – we do that. I don't have the luxury of being loaded. Whenever a script comes through the door, you're praying it's a good one, because quite often you *have* to do it. If there are some zeroes attached to it, you better fucking take it.

You signed up for three Hulk movies but *The Incredible Hulk* was as far as it went. Did you enjoy playing The Abomination?

I enjoyed the experience of the guy. I enjoyed the technology that goes into those things. I loved doing the movement of the monster. We created him. The guy who did The Hulk movement was the same guy that I had for *Planet Of The Apes*. I got him in. He's incredible. Terry Notary – he's an extraordinary guy, from Cirque du Soleil. The guy who did my movements was a Parkour guy; one of the inventors of Parkour in France. So he came in to do my stuff with me. I had a good time. It was really great. I love doing shit like that. It was like old-school theatre.

Do you watch Marvel and DC movies?

Yeah, I see them on a plane. They eat up the time.

Back to the movies that didn't work. *Grace Of Monaco* was savaged...

I could have actually cut 20 minutes out of that easily and made it better. It felt like stubbornness got in the way of the film. But I think Nicole's a fucking delight as a human being. She's one of my favourite people. But actually, it was one of the best times I've been in Cannes, because you never really know what you're made of until someone is attacking you in a very vocal way. So I'm sitting next to this lovely lady [*Kidman*], who's just being battered in a very, very cruel way. We had to come out the next day and do the press. Like, full-on bullshit. I was like, "Come on, girl, we're good. We've got this covered." We stood together on it. I was like, to the press, "Ask me anything. Give me your best shot. Give it to me, whatever you've got." It made me stronger.

Do reviews affect you, whether good or bad?

I don't read any of it, and I don't watch any of it. But occasionally... Like Quentin, I remember at the very, very beginning, to quite cleverly pull [*the interview*] around... He had one of the first reviews of *Reservoir Dogs* in his back pocket. He pulled it out and it was a bad review. He said, "But it's really well-written." I think it was *The New Statesman* or something like that. He read it. He said, "Somebody wrote about me well. Fuck all that other shit." The guy was a journalist and he was a *writer* – and that's rare. Nowadays, it's all bollocks. This garbage. It's the internet now. Anyone can call themselves a journalist. And when you're at the mercy of them, you stop thinking, you stop caring. But that's alright. It's what you get. Rough with the smooth. TF

***The Hateful Eight* is out now. *Chronic* opens on 19 February.**

2001
Monkey business as villainous General Thade in *Planet Of The Apes* remake.



2005-2008
US remakes of *Dark Water* and *Funny Games*; reimagining of *The Incredible Hulk*.

2009-2011
Plays expert lie detector Dr. Cal Lightman in 48 episodes of crime series *Lie To Me*.



2014-2016
Makes up for *Grace Of Monaco* with *Selma*, *Chronic* and *The Hateful Eight*.

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N/A Extras not available at time of going to press



Fassy gets fierce on p130



Double whammy

Hardy harks back to the original movie gangsters...

LEGEND 18

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 18 JANUARY DIGITAL HD **25 JANUARY** DVD, BD, STEELBOOK, VOD



FROM BRONSON TO BANE, from *Warrior*'s Tommy Conlan to Max Rockatansky, Tom Hardy has been such a protean force of nature in recent years that the notion of casting him as both of the Kray twins seems not so much an audacious flourish as an appropriate deployment of thespian resources.

Why *shouldn't* Britain's leading cinematic chameleon play the criminal siblings who lorded over London's swinging '60s underworld with a lethal combination of thuggish brutality and seductive showbiz glamour? The movies have clearly mastered the technical demands of allowing one actor to give multiple performances in the same frame, a sleight of hand now so familiar it's been seen in everything from *The Social Network* to *Harry Potter*. Doubling (or tripling) up is now essentially a straightforward acting challenge: one Hardy rises to so speedily and (apparently) effortlessly you can literally count the seconds it takes you to stop noticing.

The real question, then, is not why one (supremely gifted) actor should be tasked to play both halves of this deadly duo, but whether Hoxton's least welcome contribution to British society merit being depicted on screen at all. Ronald and Reginald liked nothing better than welcoming celebrities, sports figures and unwary politicians to their various clubs and drinking establishments, cannily aware their guests' reflected glory helped deflect attention from their less palatable activities. Doesn't making films about their exploits – even ones as ropey as this year's no-budget *The Rise Of The Krays* and *The Fall Of The Krays* – bestow upon the long-deceased double act precisely the kind of prestige and pre-eminence they so keenly courted in life?

Blood on the dance floor

It is a dilemma Brian Helgeland's biopic tacitly addresses with its title, one that immediately alerts us to the stylised, quasi-mythical prism through which the *LA Confidential* writer has chosen to view his subjects. Although ostensibly based on John Pearson's seminal biography *The Profession Of Violence* – a book, incidentally, that is scathingly critical of "pretty boys" Gary and Martin Kemp and their 1990 effort *The Krays* – *Legend* largely opts to shun the niceties of recorded fact, opting instead to elevate the brothers to the status of latter-day folk heroes.

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Sedimentary: Reggie (Tom Hardy) and Leslie Holt (Charley Palmer Rothwell) inspect a drink and, left, the twins tour their manor.

‘Brian Helgeland views the Krays through a stylised, quasi-mythical prism’

Witness the opening narration by Reggie’s luckless wife Frances (Emily Browning) – a woman, we’re told, who is “not careless with the truth” – that unironically proclaims them to be “gangster princes of the city they meant to conquer” over a lingering shot of their black limousine gliding through Soho’s nocturnal neon. Is this really “London in the 1960s”? Or is Helgeland slyly harking back to even older era – that of the classic Warner Brothers gangster pictures of the ’30s and ’40s, with Hardy and Hardy filling in for Bogie, Cagney and Edward G. Robinson?

If so, he’s chosen the right men. As Reggie, Hardy is the epitome of raffish, laid-back virility: a romantic soul who’d much rather woo Browning’s virginal Frances with kind words and lemon sherbets than police his manor with a knuckleduster-ed fist. He’s the ‘good’ angel to Ronnie’s bad; Hardy transforms totally to present the older sibling as a monstrous, leery grotesque with a hair-trigger temper. The result is a uniquely combustible duo, not least in an ingeniously constructed scene where they knock 10 bells out of each other on the dance floor of their Esmeralda’s Barn hotspot.



The Browning version

It is clear that neither Kray is particularly burdened with a moral centre. Yet *Legend* has one anyway in the shape of Frances, a sacrificial lamb whose initial attraction to Reggie (and, to a lesser but not insignificant extent, Ronnie as well) is gradually replaced by a fear and loathing of everything they represent. Kate Hardie, you may recall, occupied a similar role in the 1990 film. Browning’s narration, though, serves to empower this unfortunate bit-player in the Kray family soap opera, even if it does require Helgeland to extend her involvement in the story far beyond that that Frances herself endured during her tragically truncated existence.

Legend benefits additionally from lively supporting turns from David Thewlis, Paul Bettany and Paul Anderson (an actor who can currently be seen alongside Hardy in Oscar hopeful *The Revenant*), while Christopher Eccleston’s performance as dogged copper ‘Nipper’ Read inadvertently recalls *Let Him Have It*, another period story involving crime and punishment that *The Krays*’ Peter Medak directed. But ultimately this is Hardy’s film, serving both as a thunderous display of his stellar power and a triumphant vindication of his insistence that he play both brothers. Sure, his job was made easier by Helgeland finding a ghoulish strain of gallows humour in Ronnie’s psychosis, a quality as redeeming – and, yes, as fanciful – as Reg’s mushy streak of emotionalism. It would hardly be the Krays, though, if they didn’t have some unfair weaponry (claw hammer, anyone?) hidden up their sleeves.

Sadly, there’s not a single Hardy to be heard on the audio commentary, a solo effort by Helgeland that’s backed by interviews and, on Blu-ray, featurettes and an interactive map of the Krays’ East End stomping ground. Also: pre-order Blu and get a ‘now you see Ronnie/now you see Reggie’ lenticular sleeve. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Interviews** › **Featurettes (BD)** › **Interactive map (BD)**



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MACBETH 15

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OUT 25 JANUARY DIGITAL HD **1 FEBRUARY** DVD, BD, STEELBOOK

WITH ITS BRUTALLY FOCUSED narrative punctuated by visceral warfare and eerie fantasy, it's no surprise that so much of cinema's A-list – Welles, Kurosawa, Polanski – has tackled Shakespeare's fabled 'Scottish play'. Justin Kurzel (*Snowtown*) has big boots to fill in only his second feature, but delivers an astutely judged and exquisitely moody addition to an already impressive canon.

Kurzel offers a curious blend of the mythic and the muddy, trying to print the legend and the reality. Tackling *Macbeth* with bloody aplomb, he achieves a tremendous balance between sensory experience and a pessimistic anti-hero portrait.

The trick with filming Shakespeare is to translate the Bard's remarkable language into sights and sounds. Kurzel houses Macbeth in a memorably bleak, rainswept campsite and surrounds him with ochre skies that feel as if his bloody ambition has infected the landscape. Allied to the dirge of his brother Jed's score, Kurzel's sound and fury signify plenty – enhanced by an intelligent adaptation that uses voiceover to condense the play's length and adds fresh touches (a fourth witch; a tragic backstory) to draw out subtexts of grief and despair.

Michael Fassbender excels as a man being beaten by his demons, whispering soliloquies with palpable self-loathing, and is well matched by Marion Cotillard, whose alert eyes register Lady Macbeth's trajectory from scheming kingmaker to aghast monster-maker. Kurzel's penchant for gnarly faces also brings us plausible career soldiers in Paddy Considine (as Banquo) and Sean Harris (as Macduff). Extras comprise four featurettes and an interview with Kurzel – here's hoping his *Assassin's Creed* reunion with Fassbender/Cotillard is every bit as bold. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes** › **Interview**



NO ESCAPE 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

OWEN WILSON AND FAMILY TOUCH down in Southeast Asia and become embroiled in a violent coup, forced to run and gun for their lives. *If* you can ignore the rampant xenophobia (the copy-and-paste mob is not even granted subtitles), *No Escape* passes muster as a fun, dumb, OTT action movie – tense, frantic and enlivened by Pierce Brosnan as an Estuary-accented poor man's Bond. Wilson mans up effectively and Lake Bell pulls off the thankless wife/mother role. "It's a family drama masquerading as an action film," claims director John Erick Dowdle on the extras. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **Deleted scenes** › **Featurettes**



DOPE 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, DIGITAL HD

A SMART, OPINIONATED FILM WHOSE teen heroes really heart the '90s, Rick Famuyiwa's fleet-footed dark comedy sets high-school geek Malcolm (Shameik Moore) spinning when a drugs raid lands him with a backpack of 'Molly' he has to shift pronto. Unafraid to mix *Boyz N The Hood*-style action, Spike Lee-influenced social comment and funky Pharrell Williams-penned musical numbers into its caper comedy, it's an exuberant piece. But warm performances from newbie Moore and Tony Revolori (*The Grand Budapest Hotel*) keep it grounded rather than gangsta-struck. **Kate Stables**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



EVEREST 12

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 18 JAN DVD, BD, 3D BD, DIGITAL HD

THE TRUE-LIFE TALE OF TWO SEPARATE expeditions beset by disaster in 1996, *Everest* inevitably loses something in the transition from IMAX 3D to the living room. Even so, the mix of a suffering cast (the likes of Jason Clarke, Jake Gyllenhaal and Josh Brolin filmed at 10,000 feet) and invisible FX make for a teeth-chattering experience. And despite the unwieldy ensemble leaving little time to dig into characters, there's still an emotional kick. Keira Knightley, Emily Watson and Robin Wright are especially shortchanged, left to fret on the phone. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Making Of (BD)** › **Featurettes**



VACATION 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

"THE SCRIPT WAS SO DAMN FUNNY," enthuses Ed Helms on the 10-minute Making Of that accompanies this reboot. He's not wrong – leading a game cast as the head of the next-gen Griswolds, Helms and on-screen family (Christina Applegate, Skyler Gisondo, Steele Stebbins) exhaust funny bones as their road trip sees them battling futuristic tech, faecal spa facilities and Chris Hemsworth's prosthetic schlong. "I'd be annoyed if people said this was the best one," admits Chevy Chase, who cameos – and this *Vacation* very nearly earns that accolade. **Josh Winning**

EXTRAS › **Making Of (BD)** › **Gag reel (BD)** › **Featurette (BD)** › **Deleted scenes**

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RICKI AND THE FLASH 12

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

A SPIRITUAL SEQUEL OF SORTS TO Jonathan Demme's 2008 drama *Rachel Getting Married*, this Diablo Cody-scripted musical drama gives Meryl Streep another chance to exercise her vocal chords as Ricki, a failed rocker clinging to the dream she never saw fulfilled. When her estranged daughter (played by Streep's own lookalike daughter Mamie Gummer) attempts suicide, Ricki's drawn back into the fold of a family who despise her. Demme directs relatively anonymously, while Cody's script is less spiky than you're used to. Naturally, Streep shines, but even she seems to be coasting in a film that settles for frustratingly easy fixes. **Josh Winning**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Featurette** › **Deleted scenes** › **Photo gallery**



AFERIM! 18

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, DIGITAL HD

WINNER OF THE SILVER BEAR AT Berlin and hovering as a possible Oscar contender, Radu Jude's sparse, authentic Romanian western exposes the deepest roots of Balkan social history. Set in Wallachia in 1835, it sees rural cop Costandin (Teodor Corban) hired by a boyar lord to track down the gypsy slave who ran off after sleeping with his wife. Tightly plotted and surprisingly funny (with some spectacularly creative swearing from Corban's bad-tempered, intolerant old jobsworth), Jude's black and white pastoral does a fine job of tracing the racial and social divisions that are still affecting the region. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **None**



THE LOBSTER 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras N/A

OUT 8 FEBRUARY DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

EVEN BY DIRECTOR YORGOS LANTHIMOS' absurdist standards (*Dogtooth*, *Alps*), *The Lobster* is pretty weird. In a sort-of future where it's a crime to be single, lonely heart Colin Farrell checks into a dating hotel. The rules are simple: find a mate within 45 days or be transformed into an animal. Extra time is earned by hunting down rogue singles in the woods – which is where Farrell flees, trying to keep his forbidden romance with Rachel Weisz a secret before Léa Seydoux hunts them down and cuts their bits off. Self-consciously bonkers, gorgeously shot (in long, slow-mo takes) and oddly moving, it's incomparable stuff. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **TBC**



45 YEARS 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD

SHADOWS OF THE PAST LOOM OVER Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay's titular anniversary in Andrew Haigh's insightful, brilliantly acted marriage drama. Repressed relationships are a speciality of British cinema and this is almost an inverted *Brief Encounter*, with age leaving passion long dormant beneath cosy complacency. Although the cerebral chill is a shift from Haigh's romantic predecessor *Weekend*, he remains fascinated with meshing two personalities to see what music they make. You wouldn't necessarily match the irreverent Courtenay with stern Rampling, but that clash is key to the quietly heartbreaking effect. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Q&A** › **FX reel** › **Shooting notes**



99 HOMES 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras N/A

OUT 18 JANUARY DIGITAL HD
25 JANUARY DVD, BD

UNLIKE ITS HERO, UNEMPLOYED construction worker Dennis Nash (Andrew Garfield), *99 Homes* has plenty going for it. Directed by Ramin Bahrani (of 2005's excellent *Man Push Cart*), it features a great set-up, strong performances and a genuine social conscience. Evicted by reptilian realtor Rick Carver (Michael Shannon), who's strip-mining the Orlando suburbs of foreclosed houses after the 2008 crash, Nash begins working for his nemesis, and a *Margin Call*-meets-*Training Day* narrative begins. Though well-made and well-intentioned, the results are one rewrite from greatness, the awful facts remaining slightly more compelling than the fiction. **Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS › **TBC**



THE DIARY OF A TEENAGE GIRL 18

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD

"I HAD SEX TODAY – HOLY SHIT!" SAYS 15-year-old Minnie, setting a no-bull tone for Marielle Heller's boundary-busting coming-of-ager. Neither prurient nor prim, Heller's spin on Phoebe Gloeckner's '70s San Francisco-set graphic novel gatecrashes the boys' club of lusty teen-pics and owns it. *A Royal Night Out*'s Bel Powley is a royal revelation as the sex-mad teen who shags mum's (Kristen Wiig) boyf (Alexander Skarsgård). And although the set-up could invite broad comedy, Heller anchors it in *Ghost World*-ly wit, bittersweet truths and a brash, believable female PoV: canny choices for a debut crackling with forthright confidence. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Featurette**

The round-up

Zac, Sofía and much too much sex.

Reese Witherspoon and Sofía Vergara? Sounds great on paper. Doesn't work out so well on screen. A buddy com from *The Proposal*'s Anne Fletcher, **Hot Pursuit** (★★, out now, DVD/BD/Digital HD), sees a cop (Witherspoon), and a criminal's wife (Vergara) on the lam from some gun-toting hoods. Manic and mugging-intensive, it's a midnight run that goes nowhere, fast...

Love EDM? Love Zac Efron? You might just make it through **We Are Your Friends** (★★, out now, DVD/BD/Digital HD), a resistible tale of a cocky LA DJ on the rise. With sex, drugs and an animated PCP freak-out on the playlist, there's no denying it has a pulse, but non-converts may prefer less obnoxious company...



Arty shag-fest **Love** (★★, out now, DVD/BD/Digital HD) boasts director Gaspar Noé's usual dazzling visuals, courtesy of DoP Benoît Debie, but not much else. The problem with getting beautiful young people to do it on camera is that the ones up for it aren't likely to be award-worthy thesps...

In **Do I Sound Gay?** (★★★★, out now, DVD/Digital HD), journalist David Thorpe explores the stereotypical "gay voice" (see Liberace, David Sedaris, and er, Scar from *The Lion King*), while attempting to modify his own via voice coaching. With talking heads including George Takei, this is a fascinating, funny and frank doc about gay identity, internalised homophobia – and ultimate self-acceptance.




He loved a fringe but he drew the line at nipple tassels.

Ladd's night

We need to talk about Alan...

SHANE PG

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1953 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT



GEORGE STEVENS' CLASSIC Western blends two staple set-ups of the genre: the territorial clash between ranchers and homesteaders, and the lone gunslinger with a mysterious past who rids the settlement of villainy before returning to the wilderness whence he came. Alan Ladd plays the buckskin-clad Shane who shows up at the little farm of Joe Starrett (Van Heflin), his wife Marian (Jean Arthur, in her final film role) and their young son Joe Jr (Brandon De Wilde), just in time to witness the threats of a group of heavies sent by rancher Rufus Ryker (Emile Meyer).

Under the hero-worshipping gaze of the boy, Shane moves in, ostensibly as a farmhand – though we confidently await the moment when he buckles on his six-guns to protect his adopted family. Yes, the plot of *Shane* springs few surprises: you can tell pretty much what's coming, especially once Ryker sends for a notorious killer (Jack Palance, serpentine in black) to back up his arguments. The action unfolds at the stately pace typical of Stevens' post-war work (*Giant*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*) with pauses for sententious speeches about freedom and standing up for one's rights. And young De Wilde, full of cutely wide-eyed adoration, does get a bit tiresome.

Even so, there's a wistful poetry about *Shane* that redeems it from pomposity. It's at its best in the scenes of unstated emotion between Ladd and Arthur, as Marian finds herself irresistibly drawn to the laconic stranger despite her fidelity to her husband. And it looks magnificent, too, with Wyoming's Teton mountain range forming a majestic background to the action. Ladd gives a career-best performance, and there's a fine support role for Elisha Cook Jr, cast against type as a belligerent Southerner still fighting the Civil War. The commentary, from the director's son and associate producer Ivan Moffat, doesn't add too much. **Philip Kemp**

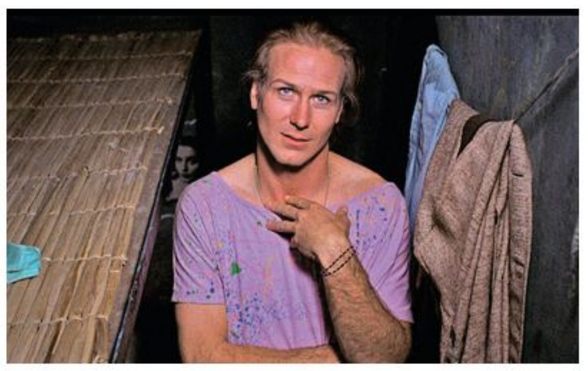
EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Interview** › **Radio adaptation** › **Booklet**

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE
1946
Henry Fonda brings civilisation to the west in John Ford's take on the Wyatt Earp legend.

STEEL DAWN
1987
Shane meets *Mad Max* in this post-apocalyptic Patrick Swayze starrer.

UNFORGIVEN
1992
Clint Eastwood's retired gunfighter un-retires to right some wrongs.



KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1985 **OUT 25 JANUARY** DVD, BD

TWO CHALK-AND-CHEESE CELLMATES in a squalid South American prison find friendship and respect in this touching drama. William Hurt plays the transgender Luis, imprisoned for "corrupting a minor"; sharing his space is Raul Julia's political prisoner Valentin. The only respite from their ordeal? Luis' elaborate re-telling of an old Nazi spy movie. While it was Hurt who bagged an Oscar for his troubles, Julia is just as moving as a man clinging to his beliefs as the fascist stooges manipulate, torture and even poison him. Powerful, provocative and groundbreaking. Extras include a featurette on source novelist Manuel Puig and a whopping photo gallery. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Featurettes** › **Gallery**



A NEW LEAF PG

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★☆☆

1971 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

GOLDEN GLOBE-NOMMED ON RELEASE but largely neglected since, comic legend Elaine May's directorial debut is a gem that deserves rediscovery. When rich snob Henry Graham (Walter Matthau on imperious form) discovers he's broke, he targets eccentric botanist Henrietta Lowell (May), hoping to marry – and then murder – her. The film was disowned by May after Paramount sliced her original three-hour cut in half, but the studio might have done her a favour. There is virtually no fat here; the screwball pacing suits the story's deft mix of erudition, slapstick and pitch-black wit, and the stars' off-kilter chemistry is a joy. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **Video essay** › **Booklet**

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DAY OF THE OUTLAW PG

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1959 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

A BLEAKLY AUSTERE WINTER WESTERN set in a small snowbound Wyoming town, André de Toth's film pits Robert Ryan at his most gauntly embittered against an invading band of baddies headed by Burl Ives. Bertrand Tavernier, in his lucid video essay, calls it 'one of the few Dreyer-esque Westerns' and you can see what he means. De Toth pares everything down to a stark minimum, building tension as the claustrophobic situation teeters out of control. A dance sequence is about as uncelebratory as can possibly be imagined. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Video essay** › **Music track** › **Booklet**



THE FALLEN IDOL PG

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★☆☆

1948 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, VOD

LONG OVERSHADOWED BY THE THIRD *Man*, Carol Reed's previous collaboration with Graham Greene on this dark, delicate story about misguided loyalty is just as noirish, and possibly (heretically) even better. A superbly nuanced story of the bond between a diplomat's lonely little son and the butler (a gloriously understated Ralph Richardson) whom he tries to defend when he's accused of murder, it's a practically perfect chamber piece. Shot for maximum tension and recently restored to mint-condition monochrome, it's a real beauty. **Kate Stables**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes** › **Interviews**



THE QUIET MAN U

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1952 **OUT NOW** BD

"THE SEXIEST FILM EVER MADE," SAID John Ford of *The Quiet Man*, which won him his fourth directing Oscar. You might disagree – anyone with a low tolerance for sentimental Hollywood Oirishry should beware – but there's a romantic sweep to the action that makes it hard to resist. John Wayne plays an ex-boxer returning to the Irish village of his birth, where he falls for local girl Maureen O'Hara, whose brother takes an instant dislike to our hero. It's essentially *The Taming Of The Shrew* transposed to '20s Ireland, played to the hilt. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Video essay** › **Booklet**



GHOST STORY 18

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★★☆

1981 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

IF JOHN IRVIN'S ROBIN HOOD (1991) was 'the one that wasn't *Prince Of Thieves*', his hit/miss Peter Straub adap was the snowy early-'80s dream-chiller that wasn't *The Shining*. The pluses are big: a fine cast of OAPs (including Fred Astaire) form a gang of guilt-haunted friends telling scare stories against Jack Cardiff's atmos-dripping images. Cruder tactics intrude via a ghost woman's prosaic revenge plot and Alice Krige's omnipresent nipples. The schlock dilutes a decent source in ways *The Shining* didn't. Generous extras. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Interviews** › **Featurettes**



WILDE 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1997 **OUT NOW** BD, DIGITAL HD

ONE GREAT BON VIVANT PORTRAYS another in Brian Gilbert's Oscar Wilde biopic. Stephen Fry is such a dead ringer for Wilde that he must have been the first and only choice; yet his fragile, emotional performance is much more than simple imitation. Jude Law, Vanessa Redgrave and Michael Sheen join the cream of British acting talent trying hard to lift a safe script from over-campness and endless witticisms, but it's Fry who succeeds with the performance of his career. A chat-track with the actor would have made an essential bonus, but this is a bare-bones disc. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **None**



LORENZO'S OIL 12

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1992 **OUT NOW** DVD

MAD MAD MAIN MAN GEORGE MILLER sure has range: he trained as a doctor before turning to movies, so he's in his wheelhouse with this medical drama, even if there's not a Dr. Dealgood in sight. Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon star as a couple frantically searching for a cure for their terminally ill son. What could have been a fairly rote tale of struggling against the odds is made memorable by an unsentimental focus on just how bloody difficult it is for the couple and the pressure it puts on their marriage. The only 'extra' is a solitary trailer. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS › **Trailer**



TOM & VIV 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1994 **OUT NOW** BLU-RAY

MIRANDA RICHARDSON LANDED HER second Oscar nomination for her work in this chronicle of T.S. Eliot's disastrous first marriage, a highbrow portrait of literary dysfunction. Based on Michael Hastings' stage play, Brian Gilbert's film contends that Eliot's travails with Vivienne Haigh-Wood were a double-edged sword – hugely embarrassing, yes, but crucial to the creation of *The Waste Land*. The viewer, though, has a bigger conundrum: fathoming what Richardson's vivacious Viv would ever see in such a stuffed shirt as Willem Dafoe's emotionally constipated poet. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **None**



THE RAGING MOON PG

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★★☆

1971 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, VOD

NOW ALL BUT FORGOTTEN, THIS 1969 British film – released in 1971 in the US as *Long Ago, Tomorrow* – was forward-thinking for its time in its portrayal of disability and sexuality. A young Malcolm McDowell is excellent as a football player who loses the use of his legs and falls for fellow wheelchair-user Nanette Newman. It's an odd mix of *Kes*-era grit and *Love Story*-esque gloop, but the combination just about works. That said, there's not a single surprise – and the world has surely moved on from needing to be reminded that the disabled are people too. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS › **Interviews** › **Gallery**

KOBAL

WORDS **LIBBY PLUMMER**

The 4K awakens

Get ready for close encounters of the 4K kind – even on your phone – as Lounge rounds up the best new tech to start 2016...





▲ PANASONIC DMR-BWT850 £599, OUT NOW

This 3D Blu-ray deck packs Freeview Play so that you can scroll back through the last seven days of TV and catch up on anything you missed. It supports 4K playback and will also upscale your standard HD Blu-rays to near-Ultra HD quality (assuming you've got a 4K-compatible TV, of course). A dual tuner means you can record two TV channels at the same time, allowing you to avoid any pesky scheduling clashes.



◀ PHILIPS AMBILUX

£TBC, COMING SOON

Harnessing the latest iteration of Philips' Ambilight technology, this beautiful panel uses nine tiny pico projectors to improve the immersiveness of your viewing experience by extending the TV picture on to the wall behind it. The softened colour glow expands the effect 3.5m around the panel in a semicircle, creating a (virtual) larger screen with a mesmerising light show. This 65-inch 4K TV is due to land any day now.

▲ SKY Q

£TBC, COMING SOON

Sky's new Netflix-style premium service offers a mixture of live TV and on-demand content – what the maker calls 'fluid viewing'. It also enables you to pause live TV and pick up where you left off on another device, so you could carry on watching on a tablet in bed or out and about. The 2TB box has a whopping 12 tuners on board so five screens can be watched at once. Voice search and 4K viewing are due to land later in the year.



▲ GOOGLE CHROMECAST

£30, OUT NOW

Like its predecessor, Google's second-gen HDMI gadget is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to turn your tellybox into a smart TV. The tiny gadget gives you access to various smart apps including Netflix, NOW TV, BBC iPlayer and Google Play with over 200,000 films and TV shows on offer. You can also wirelessly 'cast' content to your TV from a smartphone, tablet or laptop, effectively mirroring your mobile device on the big screen.

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◀ HP STAR WARS SPECIAL EDITION NOTEBOOK

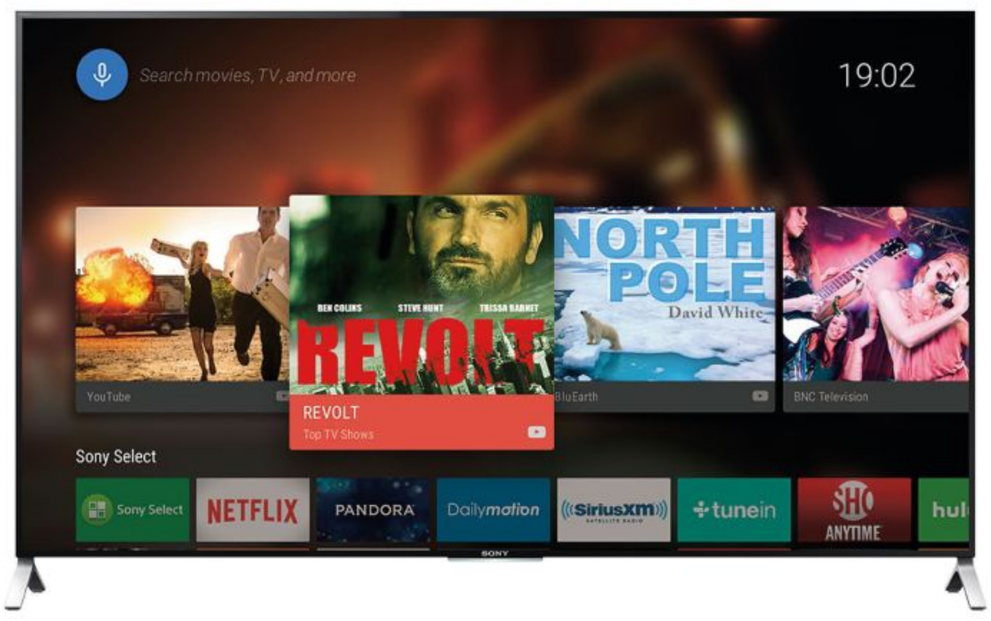
FROM £549, OUT NOW

Taking its design cues from the dark side, this laptop features a bold, battle-worn finish with a striking red backlit keyboard and Stormtrooper design. Shipped pre-loaded with *Star Wars*-themed wallpapers, screensavers, sound effects and lots of other goodies, the device packs a large 15" display and B&O Play speakers making it a superb choice for watching films on. Definitely the laptop you're looking for.

▼ SONY X90C

FROM £1,649, OUT NOW

Packing a powerful processor, this panel upscales TV broadcasts, Blu-rays and DVDs to 4K while special colour-mapping tech makes the picture as lifelike as possible. Sony's thinnest 4K panel yet, it has a razor-thin 4.9mm profile – and with a practically invisible bezel, it's basically all screen. As an Android-powered smart TV, it arranges all your apps into a friendly on-screen interface that's child's play to use.





◀ SONY XPERIA Z5 PREMIUM

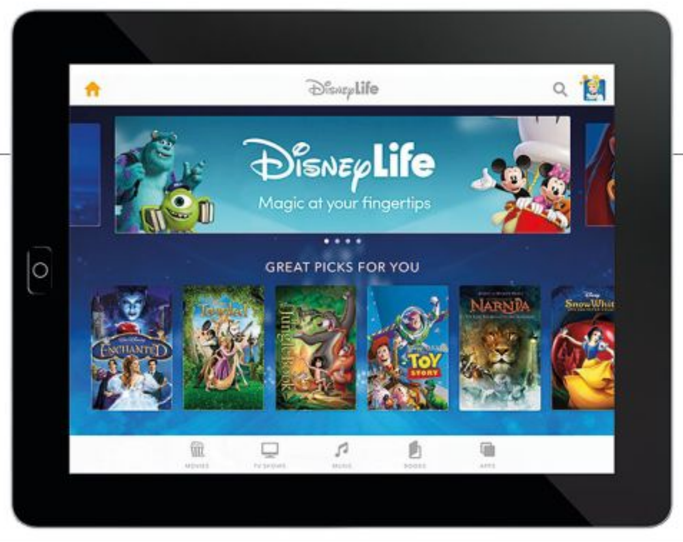
£629, OUT NOW

This pricey Android-powered handset is the world's very first 4K smartphone. While the modest 5.5-inch screen can't possibly do justice to a picture with that kind of resolution, the display is still incredibly sharp with vivid colours and great contrast making it a good choice for watching movies on the go without missing any of the action.

▶ DISNEYLIFE

£9.99 A MONTH, OUT NOW

This new streaming service gives you access to an Aladdin's cave of Disney movies, TV shows, books, music and apps. There are more than 300 movies on offer, from old classics like *The Jungle Book* to newer favourites like *Toy Story* as well as live-actioners such as *Pirates Of The Caribbean*. There are built-in parental controls, and *Frozen* is due to land on the service this spring...





▲ BENQ GP20 PROJECTOR £425, OUT NOW

Home cinema projectors are notoriously pricey, but this budget box bucks the trend. Plus it's small enough that it can easily be carried between rooms or even to a friend's house. Packing 720p tech, it also offers impressive short-throw projection which means you can create an image as big as 60" when the box is just 1.5m away from the wall.

▼ AMAZON FIRE TV 4K

£79.99, OUT NOW

Amazon's second-gen Fire TV box gives you access to movies and TV shows in 4K, as well as thousands of titles in 1080p Full HD. A new quad-core processor means it's far slicker than the previous model. It's also one of the few streaming boxes around to offer Amazon Video, Netflix and Curzon Home Cinema all in one place, along with fantastic voice search via the remote.



ON DEMAND

The pick of the films and shows to stream and download this month...



This month's big returning-TV-show news is the debut of season two of **Better Call Saul**, the spin-off that turned out better than anyone expected given a) it's *Breaking Bad* without Walter and Jesse and b) it's a prequel. Judging by the photo, life looks pretty rosy for lawyer-slash-hustler Jimmy McGill (Bob Odenkirk), but you can guarantee he'll soon be in deep water. The 10-episode season will hit Netflix on 16 February.

Meanwhile, someone you can well imagine Jimmy representing is 'ex'-hitman **John Wick** (2014, ★★★★), who'll be violently avenging his dead dog over on Sky Movies On Demand from 29 January. From 4 February you can catch that cool-sounding Ethan Hawke time-travel movie you missed as **Predestination** (2014, ★★★★) arrives on 7 Feb. And on 12 Feb the biggest non-sci-fi/superhero (though it probably could qualify as both) actioner of all time hits on demand in the form of **Fast & Furious 7** (2015, ★★★★).

Speaking of superheroes, and using the term very loosely, both Netflix and Amazon Prime have Michael Crawford as a flying Frank Spencer in **Condorman** (1981, ★★★). John Carpenter's cult kung fu western **Big Trouble In Little China** (1986, ★★★★, Netflix) is a movie that's since been turned into a comic book, while **G-Force** (2009, ★★★, Amazon Prime) is basically *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* with guinea pigs and fewer banned weapons.





TV

Mulder and wiser

David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson talk exclusively about re-opening The X-Files...

THERE ARE NO SIGNS TO suggest you're entering the Twilight Zone when you cross the threshold of Vancouver's North Shore Studios. But waiting to go on set in a nondescript conference room, *Lounge* spots a small poster in the corner. It's a UFO, hovering above the iconic words 'I Want To Believe'. And just like that, we're back in the world of *The X-Files*, the seminal sci-fi series that initially ran from 1993 to 2002 and shot its first five seasons in this very studio. "It brings back so many memories," says Gillian Anderson of her return, alongside David Duchovny, in Chris Carter's new six-episode event series, which hits screens this month. Today we're on Stage 3, which has been transformed into ex-FBI man Fox Mulder's (Duchovny) living room, scattered with newspaper clippings, Post-It notes and, um, photos of cadavers. Happily, there's plenty of life in Duchovny and Anderson as they sit down to discuss their return to the paranormal fray...

It's eight years since we've seen you as these characters – how did it feel to be back?

DAVID DUCHOVNY: It felt kind of seamless. A lot of that was to do with having Gillian and Chris there. In many ways it never left me, as much as I would have kind of wanted it to leave me... There was a point doing the show when I was afraid that it was going to be the only thing I was ever going to do, which was troubling. But now [*I look at it*] as one of those once-in-a-lifetime roles, which I'm completely grateful for.

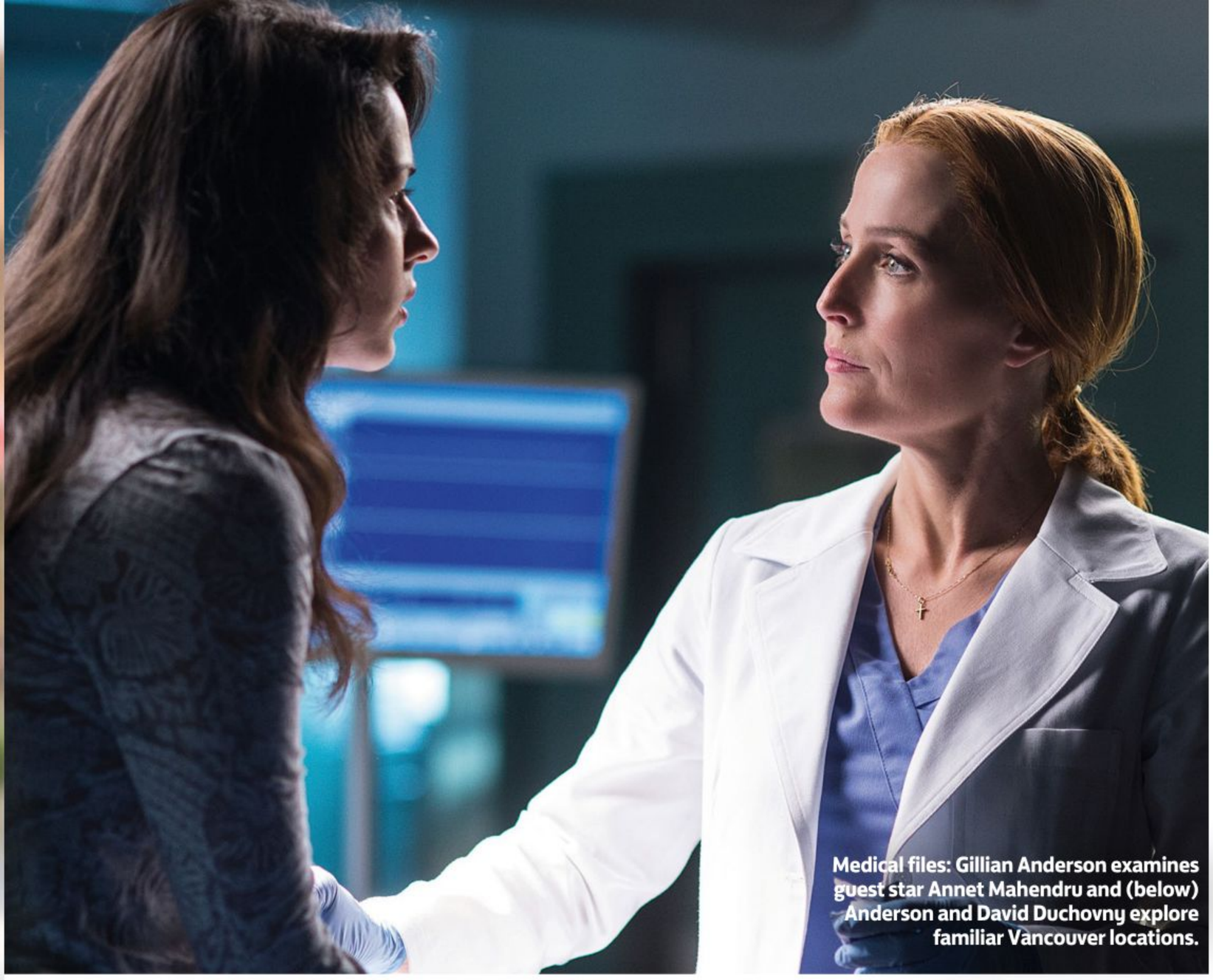
GILLIAN ANDERSON: Being Scully again was both easy and a little more challenging than I had expected. Mostly because I've worked very hard [*since the original run*] to play women without a trace of Scully – I think I buried her a lot further down than I had imagined. Also, the other women I've played have been considerably more serious than Scully. So I found that when I was called upon to be in a serious scene I was like, "Wait – I know how Stella [The Fall] holds her face, I know how Bedelia [Hannibal] holds her face, but I don't remember what serious Scully looks like!" So it was easier to find her again once we got to scenes with a bit more levity.

DD: The first day on set I had one of those horrendous monologues that Chris likes to write where I said things like 'electrogravitic propulsion'... It was a little hard to click my brain into that, but then I remembered that it doesn't matter what I'm saying because what I'm saying is usually horseshit [*laughs*]. I just have to say it fast and act like I know what I'm talking about, and the audience will go "Oh, that sounds smart."

Was it easy to say yes to a return?

GA: I did have to be talked into it. *The X-Files* used to be 22 to 24 episodes a year, so my first response was "No, I can't. I've got three kids and I can't give that kind of time." I was also feeling like I kind of do too much TV. So it was only really when they started to talk about doing a short run that I began to think, "You know, that could be fun."

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Medical files: Gillian Anderson examines guest star Annet Mahendru and (below) Anderson and David Duchovny explore familiar Vancouver locations.



DD: When we were finishing up the first TV run we talked about wanting it to go on as a movie franchise. But the second movie [I Want To Believe, *2008*] didn't do as well as the first; it was a $30m movie put out in summer. I thought, having this homegrown franchise, Fox would spend the money to make it look like a blockbuster but they didn't and at that point I thought it was dead. But then the TV landscape changed and you started getting all these limited runs on cable – so all of a sudden it was, "There's no way we could do 23, 24 episodes but we could do six, eight, 10..." So we said, "Let's start thinking about television again rather than bemoaning the fact that the second movie didn't do as well as we'd hoped."

You've played these characters for more than 20 years – how much do you feel they've evolved?

DD: He's older, but he's the same guy. You have a responsibility to the fans and to the work to honour the fact that you created a character who you just can't change willy-nilly. I can't show up and decide that Mulder is French. But you know, time passes. I look at the first season and I feel my voice is higher. I feel like everything is higher! I won't go into that.

GA: The new episodes feel like the ones that we used to do and ultimately I think that's for the best. We're not trying to change the world or start a political movement. What the episodes do is recreate what we originally did, and they're good. They're recognisable.

'We've always had chemistry over the years. Even when we weren't talking, we had chemistry'

GILLIAN ANDERSON

But from footage we've seen, Mulder looks a little more... unhinged, maybe?

DD: He's not clued-in anymore. He's basically given up. He's not shaving! So that's how things start and then... I don't think it's a spoiler to say he gets re-involved. But he's not in a happy place at first; he's not emotionally engaged with his work or with his ex-wife or whatever Scully was. I don't know if we were ever married or not. A man should know these things!

GA: Somehow I doubt they were ever married. I can't imagine them at the end of a wedding aisle, Scully wearing a white dress...

DD: We only have six episodes so I think it's smart to start with Mulder in a place where they've taken everything away from him; then over the course of those six episodes he's going to get some of it back.

Does the show delve back into the big alien-conspiracy arc?

DD: There's a new conspiracy, I would say. It's not a continuation of the old one. It's an abrupt turn.

GA: The direction that we're going in is bigger than the original series. We pretty much used to shoot for eight days per episode, then maybe one or two days of second unit. With this, it was nine, 10-day episodes. So they're bigger and fuller – without necessarily having us jumping from trains, swinging from buildings, all that action stuff.

Do we find out what's happened to the characters in the past eight years?

GA: Yeah, we do – vaguely. We don't get into too much exposition but, yeah, you get the sense.

Do you have a favourite moment from the series you can talk about?

DD: There's the episode where Fox kind of really rediscovers his mojo, and I go off on this two-page monologue on my theories of pretty much everything – and then Scully says, "That's the way I like my Mulder!" [*laughs*]. I go on and on about monsters and conspiracies and I'm all lit up and she's like, ah-ha, he's back.

GA: I think the coolest stuff is when we're doing the quintessential Mulder and Scully moments – the scenes in Mulder's office where he's throwing pencils or eating sunflower seeds or any of those uber-traditional scenarios.

Ask the X-perts: Chris Carter helms a production meeting and (below) Duchovny and Anderson talk with guest star Joel McHale.



Has the chemistry between you changed much over the years?

DD: It feels deeper, because of the years. It just feels kind of full of trust and respect... Actually that could kill it, now that I think about it, but I don't think so. Trust and respect – who wants to watch that? [*laughs*]

GA: We've always had chemistry over the years. Even at the height of our not actually talking for long periods of time, we still had chemistry when we were on camera. So it will always be there. I think it's more fun now we're older and recognise the importance of the camaraderie and friendship we have, and that we're the only people who've shared this experience together. Not that that's a huge deal, but I think we could've been better served if we'd realised that earlier on in our lives.

What do your (respective) kids make of you returning to *The X-Files*?

DD: They're happy about it because they've heard so much about the show. My son has seen a few episodes I think; he'll go and I won't know what he's doing, but then he gets scared so I know he's been watching some. My daughter's into *Game Of Thrones* and I keep telling her, you know, we're just as good as they are!

GA: My daughter's been doing work experience in the production design department; her dad was an art director on the first season of the original so it's pretty cool that she's come back. But my little ones don't really know anything about it. My six-year-old pulled out a boxset from the back of some door and said "Is this you, Mummy?" I said "yeah" and he goes "oh" and put it back, and that was the end of it!

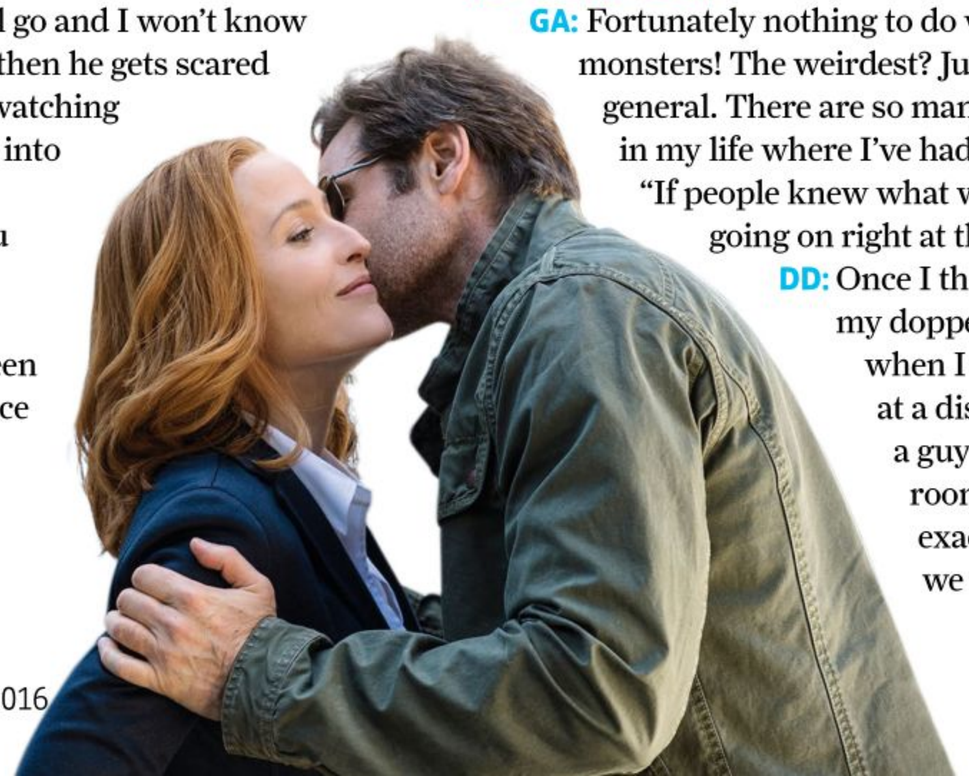
You've dealt with all kinds of strangeness in the show, but what's the weirdest real-life situation you've ever faced?

GA: Fortunately nothing to do with monsters! The weirdest? Just life in general. There are so many situations in my life where I've had the thought, "If people knew what was really going on right at this moment..."

DD: Once I thought I saw my doppelgänger, when I was like 17, at a disco. I saw a guy across the room who looked exactly like me; we waved and I walked to go see him... It was a strange thing. It could have been a mirror actually now I think about it. I was probably drinking. [*laughs*]

What do you see as the show's legacy – and what impact do you think the new season will have?

GA: Our show was the beginning of a lot of things. A lack of lighting on TV, for one thing [*laughs*]. It was also the start of a particular intelligent dynamic between a man and a woman, a platonic dynamic. It made huge strides for television in many different areas. I don't think we're going to be doing the same thing this time around – although the more people I talk to, the more it seems they do want it to be exactly the same [*laughs*]. They want to have the same feeling they had way back when they were sitting on the couch with their dad, being allowed to stay up late on a Friday or Sunday night... So hopefully that's what we will provide and it will be equally satisfying. **Jenny Cooney Carillo**



ETA | TBC FEBRUARY **The new series of *The X-Files* will debut on Channel 5 next month.**

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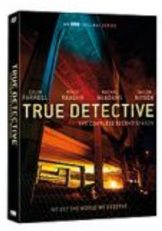
Darkness palls

Noir follow-up is a neo-miss...

TRUE DETECTIVE: SEASON 2 18 TBC

Show ★★☆☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

2015 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD



TRUE DETECTIVE'S FIRST season was a slow-burn character study which, despite its familiar tropes, felt entirely new. Most unusual was the fact that the series was written by a single then-unknown writer, Nic Pizzolatto – hence its novelistic tone. Pizzolatto is the only element that carries over to the second season. So, can lightning strike twice? The answer, judging by this turgid, muddled sophomore run, is a resounding no.

Swapping out Louisiana marshland for a California industrial town, season two feels more familiar from the off, a neo-noir potboiler that wears its Lynchian influences on its sleeve. The ritualistic murder of a politician brings to a head several strands of local corruption, and forces three cops from different jurisdictions to work together: self-loathing drunk Ray (Colin Farrell), edgy loner Ani (Rachel McAdams) and repressed military man Paul (Taylor Kitsch).

McAdams is the standout by a mile, her sharp performance making Ani's demons fascinating to watch, while Farrell is likeable in a leaden role. But in place of the sparky yin-yang contrast between Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson, here we have three characters all mumbling the same nihilistic gobbledegook in the same hard-bitten monotone, and the result is unintentionally comedic.

It doesn't help that Pizzolatto's dialogue feels like a parody of season one; on that front, Vince Vaughn's Frank, a gangster thwarted in his attempts to go straight, draws the shortest straw. He's distractingly lifeless, and not helped by lines such as: "It's like blue balls... in your heart."

There are individual scenes that compel, but *True Detective*'s second run is a clunky and cliche-ridden disappointment, grasping for profundity and in doing so forgetting to tell a convincing story about human beings. If you loved season one, do yourself a favour by skipping this. **Emma Dibdin**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries** › **Featurettes** › **Episode previews/recaps**

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

CHINATOWN
1974
Systemic corruption and flawed anti-heroes combine in a taut LA classic.

TWIN PEAKS
1990-
Pizzolatto tries and fails to replicate the surreal poetry of Lynch's woozy soap noir.

MIAMI VICE
2006
Colin Farrell in a visually rich, narratively underdeveloped cop remake.



THE BRIDGE: SEASON 3 15

Show ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

2015 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

THE BEST OF THE NORDIC NOIRS (yeah, *The Killing*, we went there) returns for a third helping, and quality has been maintained. There have been changes: co-lead Kim Bodnia's warmth is missed as a contrast to the spiky Sofia Helin. Luckily, Helin's performance as an Aspergers-ish detective continues to compel. Her case this year is a nice blend of *The Bridge*'s traditional head-on approach to politics – a founder of a gender-neutral school is first to die – and some *Hannibal*-ish murders-as-art, which sit unexpectedly well among all the frowning. Extras aren't plentiful, but are pretty in-depth – more so than usual for a non-English show. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS › **Documentary** › **Q&A**



JEKYLL & HYDE: SERIES 1 12

Show ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

2015 **OUT NOW** DVD, VOD

TAKING THE ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON classic as its jumping off point, *Jekyll And Hyde* sees Dr. Robert Jekyll (Tom Bateman) using his Hyde side to help a secret British agency fight other supernatural monsters. With CGI and comic-book aesthetics rampaging, the show has designs on *Doctor Who* levels of family entertainment, but the scripts (by Charlie Higson) just aren't as sharp or witty. Still, mysteries, conspiracies and revelations keep interest going across all 10 episodes – though the real draw is Bateman's dual performance as the honourable Jekyll and his cartoonishly selfish alter-ego. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



Extras

The other stuff we're excited about this month...

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

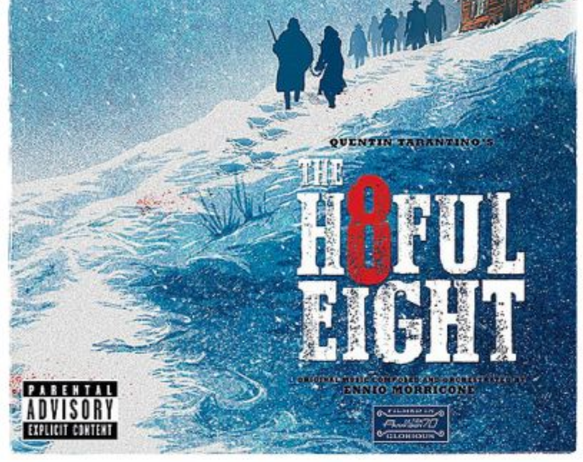
SOUNDTRACK **OUT NOW**



The title track's controlled explosion is the only possible opener to the soundtrack of the hit N.W.A. rap-pic. Thereafter, scenic routes prevail: besides signature N.W.A. attacks ('Fuck Tha Police' is obvious), P-Funk legends Parliament and Roy Ayers Ubiquity point the winding way to Compton. Post-N.W.A. entries include Ice Cube and Snoop Dogg, their dirty, fractious broadsides proving well-chosen in an adroit, if hardly exhaustive (as if...) tribute to the reach of West Coast hip-hop.

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

SOUNDTRACK **OUT NOW**



First Western score in 40 years, first full one for Tarantino: high expectations shadow Ennio Morricone's latest. But external pressures can't match the pressure generated by the maestro's low-end horns, looming strings, hypnotically sinuous main melody and thud-thud percussive dread here. 'L'Inferno Bianco' and 'Neve (#2)' cleave closer to Morricone's horror history than Leone: but either way, he mounts a tight-wound Mexican stand-off of a score, juddering with masterfully sustained tension.

SHERLOCK FIGURES

COLLECTIBLES **OUT NOW**

Satisfy your post-'Abominable Bride' cravings for more *Sherlock* with these shelf-improvers. Top pick for the Cumber-fans is Underground Toys' five-inch figure, which comes complete with violin, skull, phone and photo-accurate haughty expression. Then there's the Funko Pop range, which could be accused of Cumber-sploitation with four different Sherlock figures. And finally Titan's blind-boxed collection of diddy three-inchers: yeah, we're happy with Irene, but we *really* wanted Moriarty in a big crown...





ALIEN QUEEN BANK

COLLECTIBLE **OUT FEB**

It's all very well to save your pennies for a rainy day – but how do you keep them out of the wrong hands? Problem solved with this Alien Queen bank, inspired by James Cameron's '86 action classic. It's so terrifyingly detailed that no one'll dare touch it for fear of having their fingers gnashed. Crafted from a sculpt by Eli Livingston for Diamond Select, the xeno-monarch holds your coins and notes so elegantly, there's nothing piggy about this bank.

PETER VENKMAN STATUE

COLLECTIBLE **COMING SOON**



Mother puss bucket! Hollywood Collectibles has sculpted the most awesome *Ghostbusters* goodie with its brand new 1:4 scale statue of Bill Murray in full Dr. Peter Venkman mode. He comes in a bustin' uniform (complete with Proton Pack and Neutrona Wand) and stands on a *Ghostbusters* logo stand. Made from polystone and hand-painted, the Venkman piece is limited to only 1,000 worldwide, so get your pre-order in now.

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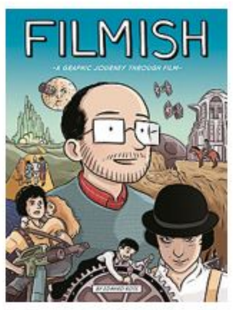
Life in pictures

Movie history goes to 'toon...

FILMISH: A GRAPHIC JOURNEY THROUGH FILM

Book ★★★★★

EDWARD ROSS | Self-Made Hero



UNPRETENTIOUS to the last, online critic and expert Seagal-ogist Vern invented a great word to demystify his beloved art form: filmatism – as in, and we're paraphrasing here, "*On Deadly Ground*'s script sucked balls, but I really admire the filmatism." For his "graphic journey through film" writer/illustrator Edward Ross has come up with another: filmish. *Filmish*, the book, turns the language of film theory into easy-to-follow visuals, with the author *Where's Wally*-ing through cine-history, so we see him as Charles Foster Kane and Gene Kelly, explaining complex strands of critical thought.

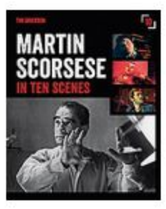
The chapter 'The Eye', for example, introduces cinema's beginnings and basic technology, before looking at *Rear Window*'s characterisation of cinema-as-voyeurism, and theorist Laura Mulvey's conception of 'the male gaze' in *Peeping Tom* and the slasher genre. 'Sets And Architecture', meanwhile, examines how the heroes of *Blade Runner* and *Die Hard* overcome the oppressive spaces they find themselves in; John McClane is hailed as "action cinema's greatest urban explorer".

Whether musing on race, gender and disability, or the dangers of Pentagon-approved war films, Ross really knows his stuff, displaying good taste in the case studies (*The Fly*, *They Live!*, *Primer*) and a keen eye for detail. Hand on heart, most scholars find a lot of these issues dry, so to have them dramatised in vibrant storyboards is an absolute gift to media studies students – and budding filmatists – everywhere. **Matt Glasby**

MARTIN SCORSESE IN TEN SCENES

Book ★★★☆☆

TIM GRIERSON | Ilex



FROM MEAN STREETS to *Hugo*, Grierson's glossy effort uses 10 key sequences from Scorsese's catalogue to illustrate themes, techniques and vision. Some are obvious – *Taxi Driver*'s bloodbath finale, *GoodFellas*' Copacabana tracking shot; others less so, with music doc *The Last Waltz* even given space. Analysis is accessible, if hardly awe-inspiring, and while the prose is stacked with cut-and-paste quotes, at least they're chosen liberally from Scorsese's collaborators. Not the best Marty book, but as visual primers go, it does the job. **James Mottram**

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY...

Book ★★★★☆

TAMAR JEFFERS MCDONALD
BFI Palgrave



WE ALL KNOW THE "I'll have what she's having" scene, of course. But McDonald sets out to discuss far more of Rob Reiner's 1989 romcom than that. She examines the symmetries and parallels of Nora Ephron's ingenious script, with its meaningful deployment of split screens, and the cunning use of classic songs to point up the action. And while firmly refuting reviewers who dismissed the film as 'Woody Allen-lite', she never loses sight of the fact that it was then, and still is, hugely enjoyable. **Philip Kemp**

AMAZING FANTASTIC INCREDIBLE: A MARVELOUS MEMOIR

Book ★★★☆☆

STAN LEE, PETER DAVID & COLLEEN DORAN | Touchstone Books



THIS 'GRAPHIC MEMOIR' is the perfect way to literally illustrate Stan Lee's life, and not just because it is the medium in which he made his name. Artist Colleen Doran's style marries well with Lee's enthusiastic narration, even as it rambles conversationally. Tidbit trivia is all part of the fun of course, but this rather self-congratulatory account skimps on the rocky relationships with key collaborators Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. **Matt Looker**

Three more...

Feral kids, female icons and big furry hats.

THE ART OF THE GOOD DINOSAUR

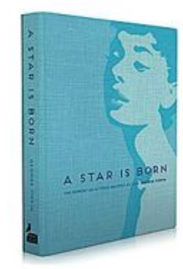
★★★☆☆



A compilation of concept art, storyboards and pencil sketches, this basically retells the Pixar film as a wordless storybook. The art is gallery-worthy gorgeous, but there's no insight into how the film evolved over its troubled production.

A STAR IS BORN

★★★☆☆



Pics and profiles of actresses-slash-icons past and present, the goal being to pinpoint the look, line or scene that made them into stars. Starts in the silent era, ends with Jennifer Lawrence, but the lack of non-white faces seriously limits its scope.

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

★★★★★



David Lean's blockbuster has suffered some knocks over the years, but Ian Christie's book is a winner; an object lesson in just how much analysis and anecdotage can be crammed into under 100 pages. *Attack Of The Clones* sneaks in a homage? Who knew?

INSTANT EXPERT

Surfing Movies

Wave culture...

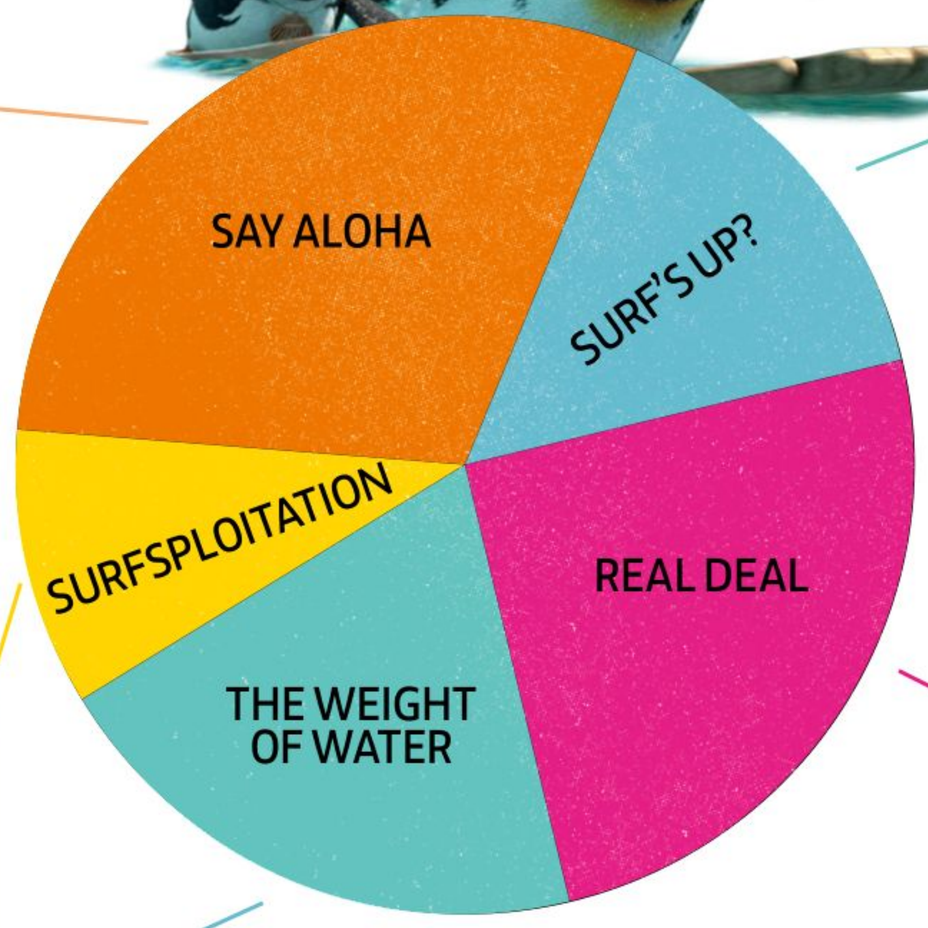


In 1975, *Surfer Magazine* described the surf movie as "a high-energy situation... Next to actually being in the water, it can provide the most intense moments of our surfing lives." Two decades earlier, the genre kicked off with ex-lifeguard Bud Browne's *Hawaiian Surfing Movies*. Low-budget, self-distributed insider surf movies like *Cat On A Hot Foam Board* followed, and studios soon followed suit: 1959's influential *Gidget* proved a hit, and Elvis Presley's *Blue Hawaii* (1961) saw him play a demobbed GI, singing 'n' surfin'.



Buoyed by the success of the Sandra Dee-starring *Gidget*, the so-called 'beach-party films' sprang up – teen romps like *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965) and *Muscle Beach Party* (1964) shoehorned in surf scenes to appeal to the Californian crowd. It didn't last – but the surfing movie remained a viable vehicle. The surf-exploitation genre spawned such items as cult flick *Surf Nazis Must Die* (1987) which concludes with a grenade-launching grandma getting medieval on the titular villains. As the poster says: "The waves are a war zone."







The genre took on more serious issues in the '70s – largely thanks to John Milius, who devised the scene in *Apocalypse Now* where Robert Duvall's surf-mad Lt. Colonel Kilgore implores his men to get on their boards amid falling bombs ("Charlie don't surf!"). Likewise, Milius' 1978 film *Big Wednesday* deals with three buddies catching waves and dodging the draft. Hugely influential, its cod-philosophy would resurface in Kathryn Bigelow's *Point Break*.



Despite the success of *Point Break* (1991), the surf movie didn't regain its '60s momentum; the only other 'notable' example of the '90s is *In God's Hands* (1998). But the genre has made progress in recent years with two female-driven dramas: *Blue Crush* (2002), starring Kate Bosworth and Michelle Rodriguez; and 2011's *Soul Surfer*, about real-life competitor Bethany Hamilton, who continued to surf after losing an arm in a shark attack. Could the remake of *Point Break* [*see p100*] inspire a new wave?



As you might expect, a key sub-genre of the surf movie is the surf doc, which enjoyed its big breakout with Bruce Brown's *The Endless Summer* (1966). Following Brown around the globe (Ghana, Senegal, Tahiti, South Africa...) in search of the perfect wave, the film bagged a national release, backed by rave reviews. The format is hard to beat; more recent classics include Dana Brown's exposé of secret surf spots *Step Into Liquid* (2003) and Stacy Peralta's history of surf culture *Riding Giants* (2004). **JM**

Key movies



THE ENDLESS SUMMER
1966 ★★★★★

From its iconic orange/purple beach poster to its bold, muscular portrait of the sport, Bruce Brown's seminal surfing doc has been oft-imitated but never bettered.



BIG WEDNESDAY
1978 ★★★★

Former lifeguard John Milius funnels his obsession with riding waves in this cult Californian coming-of-ager starring Gary Busey, William Katt and Jan-Michael Vincent.



POINT BREAK
1991 ★★★★★

Adrenaline junkies Keanu Reeves and Patrick Swayze surf the big waves and rob the big banks in Kathryn Bigelow's hit thriller, which throws in skydiving and an epic foot chase for good measure.



RIDING GIANTS
2004 ★★★

Hot off skateboarding documentary *Dogtown And Z-Boys* (2001), Stacy Peralta returned to action with this non-fictioner about surfing's humble beginnings and its evolution.

Vital statistics

$50,000
budget for *The Endless Summer*

70
height (in feet) of *Riding Giants*' biggest waves

79
weeks *Blue Hawaii* soundtrack spent on the *Billboard* charts

$84m
worldwide gross for *Point Break*

KOBAL

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'A subversive treat, potently feminist in unexpected ways'

RANT

Is it just me?

...or is Miss Congeniality Sandra Bullock's best performance? *asks Jamie Graham*

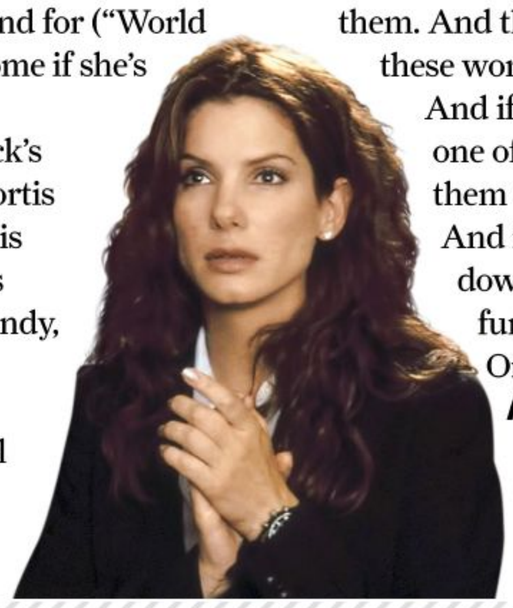
THIS MONTH, POLITICAL drama *Our Brand Is Crisis* sees Sandra Bullock again favour chops over chuckles, as is often the case with her movies these days. Having accelerated on to the A-list in 1994 with *Speed*, she spent the remainder of the decade in comedies, thrillers and romances (*The Net*, *Speed 2: Cruise Control*, *Practical Magic*, *Forces Of Nature*). Sure, with the exception of superior weepie *While You Were Sleeping*, all of them were crap, but Sandy shone – proof that you can indeed polish a turd.

Then, in 2000, Bullock starred in rehab drama *28 Days*. And so began the gravitational pull towards 'serious' performances – first *Crash* (2004), then *Infamous* (2006) and finally a Best Actress statuette-bagging role as the brassy, inspirational Leigh Anne Tuohy in biopic *The Blind Side* (2009). Hell, she almost nabbed a second Oscar four years later for getting lost in space in *Gravity*.

But let's rewind to 2000 – not to *28 Days* but to Bullock's other movie of that year, *Miss Congeniality*. She plays Gracie Hart, an 'unkempt' (as the tagline has it) FBI agent with two left feet, a snorting laugh and a huge gob that's usually chomping on a doughnut. Imagine graceless Gracie's horror, then, when it's discovered that the Miss United States beauty pageant is a target for terrorists, and she's to go undercover as a contestant. Her manners must be polished, her gait straightened ("I haven't seen a walk like that since *Jurassic Park*," gasps Michael Caine's 'beauty consultant'), and her bikini line waxed. Most of all, though, her sneering derision for her new air-head colleagues ("April 25th," replies Miss Rhode Island when asked for her idea of a perfect date) and what they stand for ("World peace!") must be overcome if she's to maintain her cover.

Developed by Bullock's production company Fortis Films, *Miss Congeniality* is tailor-made for its star's considerable talents. Sandy, of course, has always been Hollywood's unfeasibly gorgeous girl next door, so who else to play a galumphing, punchbag-pounding social misfit who transforms, Pygmalion-like, into a ravishing beauty with impeccable etiquette? But the key here is the balancing act at play. At once poking fun at the shallow, politically un-PC world of ditzy beauty contestants and highlighting that anyone who views these women as such is the real dimwit, *Miss Congeniality* is a subversive treat, potently feminist in unexpected ways.

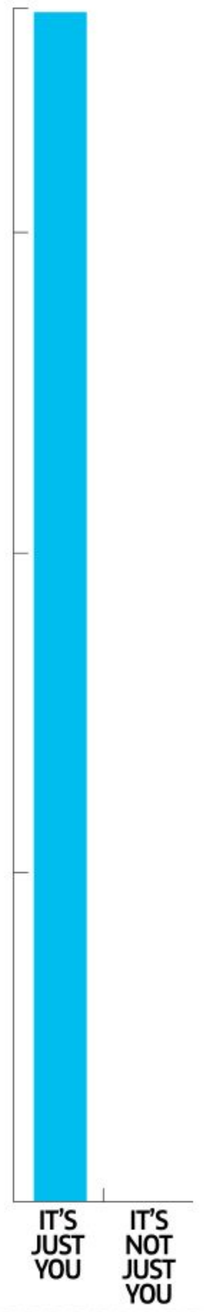
It's certainly more elaborately feathered than most 'ugly duckling' transformation tales. As Gracie says, when asked what she'd say to people who view Miss United States as outdated: "I used to be one of them. And then I came here and realised these women are smart, terrific people... And if anyone – *anyone* – tries to hurt one of my new friends, I will take them out... I will make them suffer... And if they run, I will hunt them down." Bullock's never been funnier or, indeed, stronger. Or is it just me?



Agree or disagree? Tell us at www.gamesradar.com/totalfilm or join us on Facebook and Twitter.

OFFICE-OMETER

The *TF* staff verdict is in!



LAST MONTH...

In *TF*241, Tom Bond argued that *Quantum Of Solace* is one of Bond's best. You respond...

BEN STAHLY
I loved what *QOS* did. As a direct sequel to *Casino Royale*, it's a damn-near perfect conclusion to an incomplete story. Plus Olga Kurylenko is hands-down best Bond girl since Michelle Yeoh.

PAUL WESTON
The last decent Bond movie was *Live And Let Die*.

BRIAN QUAST
QOS is the worst of Craig's Bonds, but still ranks better than the majority of other 007 movies.

BORIS PROLE
I loved it. It has a ridiculous amount of well-shot action. It's not forcibly prolonged like *Home Alone*, sorry, *Skyfall*...

PAUL VALENTINE
No it wasn't. Stop being silly.

TOMAS TOCUS
It's Craig's version of *The World Is Not Enough*, which was Brosnan's worst Bond film.

CHRIS SMITH
It's abysmal – like a *Bourne* film edited to hell. Can't work out what was going on in the action scenes and Bond's character has been changed completely into just a thug.



EDUARDO PIRES
Hottest Bond girl ever, most underrated Bond film ever.



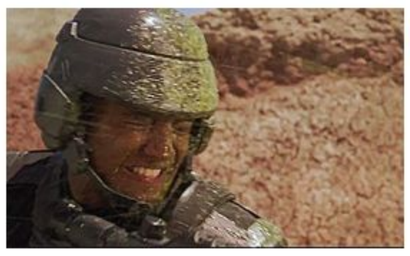
A Bug's Death

STARSHIP TROOPERS | Tanker topped...

PAUL VERHOEVEN'S CONTROVERSIAL sci-fi pits Aryan poster boy Johnny Rico (Casper Van Dien) and the mobile infantry against marauding alien arachnids of all shapes and sizes. But their mission to a planet named Tango Urilla adds an explosive new element to the director's trademark sex, violence and satire – fire, and lots of it.



1 An air strike destroys armies of swarming warrior bugs. Rasczak (Michael Ironside), Rico and the Mobile Infantry move in among the corpses.



2 A lone arachnid warrior attacks. Rico, Dizzy (Dina Meyer) and co blow it to twitching pieces. Watkins (Seth Gilliam) finishes the job in a blur of green goo.



3 Rico locates a bug hole, arms a nuclear explosive, and with a cry of "Fire in the hole!" the insect den is neutralised. Corporal Birdie (Ungela Brockman) calls for back-up.



4 As the soldiers surround the remaining bugs, the ground opens and a massive tanker bug appears, incinerating the corporal's arm with geysers of fire.



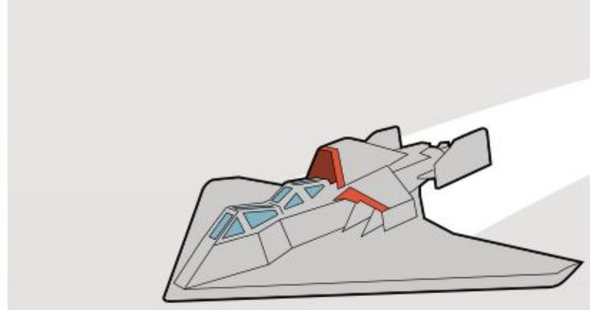
5 Rico jumps on the tanker, and machine guns a hole in its shell. Clinging on for dear life, he hurls a grenade into the fresh cavity and is thrown off the bug into the dust.



6 The tanker explodes. Rico strides off victorious. "I need a corporal," says Rasczak. "You're it until you're dead, or I find someone better..."

Matt Glasby

***Starship Troopers* is available on DVD, Blu-ray and VOD now.**



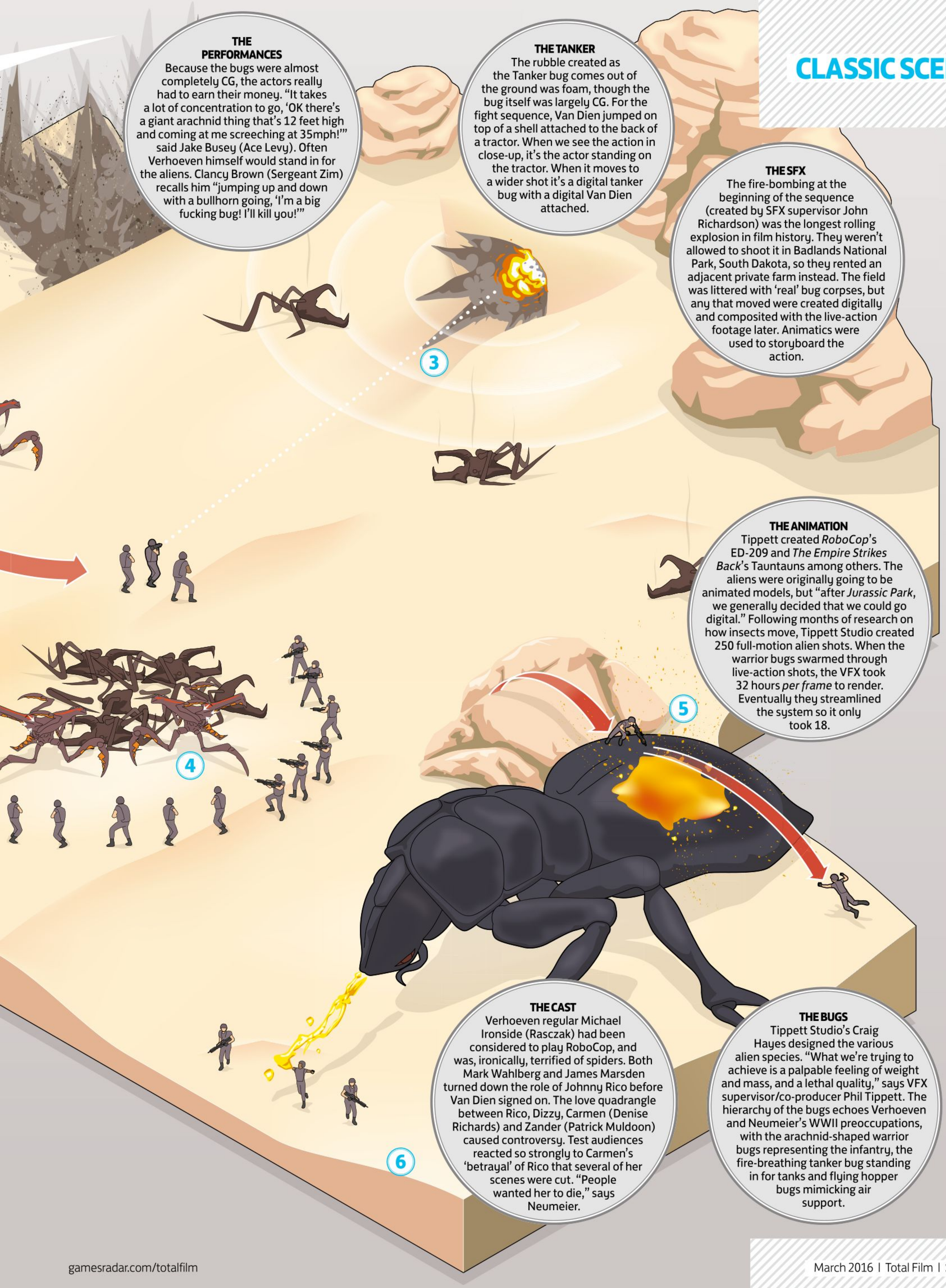
THE BACKGROUND

Ed Neumeier's (*RoboCop*) original script *Bug Hunt At Outpost Nine* did the rounds for years. When similarities with Robert A. Heinlein's 1959 novel *Starship Troopers* were pointed out, the book was optioned and its plot and character names assimilated. Problem was, Heinlein's work was horribly right-wing. "I stopped after two chapters because it was so boring..." complains Verhoeven. "It is really quite a bad book." Between them, the filmmakers hatched a subversive solution...

THE POLITICS

Verhoeven (who lived through the WWII German occupation of The Netherlands) and Neumeier satirised Heinlein's rampant militarism with mock news reports in the style of Nazi propaganda and Gestapo-esque uniforms. "If I tell the world that a right-wing, fascist way of doing things doesn't work, no one will listen to me," said Verhoeven. "So I'm going to make a perfect fascist world: everyone is beautiful, everything is shiny... But it's only good for killing fucking bugs!"

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THE PERFORMANCES
Because the bugs were almost completely CG, the actors really had to earn their money. "It takes a lot of concentration to go, 'OK there's a giant arachnid thing that's 12 feet high and coming at me screeching at 35mph!'" said Jake Busey (Ace Levy). Often Verhoeven himself would stand in for the aliens. Clancy Brown (Sergeant Zim) recalls him "jumping up and down with a bullhorn going, 'I'm a big fucking bug! I'll kill you!'"

THE TANKER
The rubble created as the Tanker bug comes out of the ground was foam, though the bug itself was largely CG. For the fight sequence, Van Dien jumped on top of a shell attached to the back of a tractor. When we see the action in close-up, it's the actor standing on the tractor. When it moves to a wider shot it's a digital tanker bug with a digital Van Dien attached.

THE SFX
The fire-bombing at the beginning of the sequence (created by SFX supervisor John Richardson) was the longest rolling explosion in film history. They weren't allowed to shoot it in Badlands National Park, South Dakota, so they rented an adjacent private farm instead. The field was littered with 'real' bug corpses, but any that moved were created digitally and composited with the live-action footage later. Animatics were used to storyboard the action.

THE ANIMATION
Tippett created *RoboCop*'s ED-209 and *The Empire Strikes Back*'s Tauntauns among others. The aliens were originally going to be animated models, but "after *Jurassic Park*, we generally decided that we could go digital." Following months of research on how insects move, Tippett Studio created 250 full-motion alien shots. When the warrior bugs swarmed through live-action shots, the VFX took 32 hours *per frame* to render. Eventually they streamlined the system so it only took 18.

THE CAST
Verhoeven regular Michael Ironside (Rasczak) had been considered to play RoboCop, and was, ironically, terrified of spiders. Both Mark Wahlberg and James Marsden turned down the role of Johnny Rico before Van Dien signed on. The love quadrangle between Rico, Dizzy, Carmen (Denise Richards) and Zander (Patrick Muldoon) caused controversy. Test audiences reacted so strongly to Carmen's 'betrayal' of Rico that several of her scenes were cut. "People wanted her to die," says Neumeier.

THE BUGS
Tippett Studio's Craig Hayes designed the various alien species. "What we're trying to achieve is a palpable feeling of weight and mass, and a lethal quality," says VFX supervisor/co-producer Phil Tippett. The hierarchy of the bugs echoes Verhoeven and Neumeier's WWII preoccupations, with the arachnid-shaped warrior bugs representing the infantry, the fire-breathing tanker bug standing in for tanks and flying hopper bugs mimicking air support.

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON PICKERSGILL/ACUTE GRAPHICS

60 SECOND SCREENPLAY



TF saves you a night out every month. This issue: we slim down The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2...



FADE IN:

INT: SAME DEPRESSING MEDICAL FACILITY AS 12 MONTHS AGO
JENNIFER LAWRENCE receives therapy for being choked, and for endings that come out of nowhere.

VOICE THERAPIST
...And I understand you were halfway through a scene when someone said, "Sod it, let's just stop there, next bus is in five minutes."

JENNIFER LAWRENCE
[*Whispering*] I... was... like... what... the... fu...

VOICE THERAPIST
Good, Jen! Now, repeat "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood" 10 times and you can go back to doing war.

JULIANNE MOORE
OK, this is the big finale, so I'm raising the grimness level from 'Early Mike Leigh' to 'Michael Haneke Boxset'. No smiling unless you're being bitterly ironic.

JENA MALONE
How about random unsettling bursts of mad-clown laughter?

JULIANNE MOORE
That's fine, but do make sure they will echo in children's darkest nightmares forevermore.

GWENDOLINE CHRISTIE
I don't have time to be in this movie. OK, one small scene then I've got to get back in the bacofoil for *Star Wars*.

JULIANNE MOORE
No big, exciting battles for you, Jen! I want you to follow the production crew as they smash up the set so you can do your little video diaries amid piles of fetching rubble.

JENNIFER LAWRENCE
Wow. I think I might bring a book.

JULIANNE MOORE
This'll cheer you up – you'll be accompanied by the mentally unstable man who throttled you. He wants some more 'hands-on' experience, ha ha. No, but if he does murder you just ignore him.

EXT: THE CRAP-ITOL
The city centre has been blown to bits. Although the machine that pumps out gallons of Death Guinness seems to be working OK.

FLESH-EATING SEWER MUTANT
Oy! We've been stuck down here since *The Descent* and want our dinner!

SAM CLAFLIN
Booby traps... genetically engineered nasties... If this isn't a Hunger Games I don't know what is! These Games are the Hungriest ever! I say 'Hunger', you say 'Games'! I'm just here to shoehorn in title references and die, basically.

SAM dies, some tiger-lady from *Cats* wanders in by accident and JOSH HUTCHERSON babbles about bread like he's auditioning for the next Warburtons ad.

JOSH HUTCHERSON
Have I lost all sense of reality? They say this series has only been going three years, but it feels like decades...

LIAM HEMSWORTH
Yeaaaah, you're fine. Hey, let's go outside for some fresh air strikes!

Among the casualties is JENNIFER's sister, her death creating great shockwaves of indifference.

JENNIFER LAWRENCE
No! No! No! No way am I looking after that gutbucket Garfield of hers! Somebody help! I need a cattery!

JENNIFER is knocked unconscious, missing most of the cool revolution stuff. Instead she has a quiet chat with DONALD SUTHERLAND in his greenhouse.

JENNIFER LAWRENCE
We need a twist to make up for our uniquely sexless love triangle. Got it – I'll kill Julianne rather than Donald. Everyone knows what a butterfingers I am. It'll be fine.

EXT: DISTRICT NICE
JENNIFER has been let off the hook – she only killed *one* president, right? – and living tolerably ever after with JOSH and their kids.

JENNIFER LAWRENCE
I have nightmares... about a YA dystopian world horribly divided: 'Candour', 'Erudite', 'Allergic', 'Plain', 'Stupid'... Give me kids on TV sticking pitchforks any day over that nonsense!

FIN

NEXT ISSUE: ***STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS***

WORDS: MATTHEW LEYLAND

COMING NEXT ISSUE...
ON SALE 12 FEBRUARY

- It's a fantasy bonanza! With magic! Monsters! Maybe mullets!
- Sundance round-up! Hot news from the frost-bitten film festival!
- We chat to Luke Evans about his one gazillion new films...
- ...and review the hell out of February's releases! Miss it not!

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